

Rev. Dr. Griffith
Griffith

THE APOSTLES' CREED :

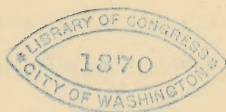
CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO THE WANTS OF THE RELIGIOUS SENSE,
AND CERTAIN ERRORS OF THE PRESENT DAY.

BY THE REV.

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TO HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY
QUEEN ADELAIDE.

MADAM,

IT is with feelings of reverent gratitude that I dedicate to your Majesty, by your Majesty's most gracious permission, the following practical Exposition of the Apostles' Creed.

The value of this permission is greatly enhanced to me, by its being accorded in consequence of your Majesty's approbation of my former work on the Spiritual Life.

I earnestly pray that the divine Truths of this Creed may be increasingly blessed to your Majesty's advancement in the experience of that Life.

I have the honour to be,

MADAM,

Your Majesty's most grateful and
devoted humble Servant,

THOMAS GRIFFITH.

P R E F A C E.

To the members of my congregation, at whose request this Work is published, I affectionately commend it.

You will find in it the substance of what, in various ways, both private and public, I have endeavoured to expound to you by word of mouth. And I have been the less reluctant to give to the sentiments which it contains the more permanent form which they now assume, because I hope (as I also pray) that they may supply to others, what you profess to have found in them for yourselves, a thread, however slender, to guide the earnest Christian through that tangled labyrinth of multiform error, in which so many minds are now in danger of being lost. Such Works as those of Pearson and Barrow, on the Creed, are storehouses for all time. I offer these pages as a hand-book for the present times.

For it has been my object to treat the several Articles of the Christian Faith, First, with reference to the practical needs and experiences of the religious sense ; exhibiting their bearing and importance in relation to the grand essential work of the spiritual life. And, Secondly, with reference to the manifold exaggerations and perversions to which a zeal for an ecclesiastical Formalism

on the one hand, and a disorganizing Spiritualism on the other, expose us. Hence the extent at which I have dwelt on the topics of the Holy Catholic Church, and the Communion of Saints ; and generally on the entire work of the Holy Ghost, as the Vicegerent of Christ, “by whom the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified.” While other fundamental points, such as the Personality of God—the Deity of Christ—the evidence for His Resurrection—the assurance of our own continued being and blessedness after death—and the nature and grounds of that belief to which the Articles of our Creed are entitled, have received an attention proportioned to my deep conviction of their momentousness.

The occasion, then, and object of the Work, determine the point of view from which it is to be judged of. They will account for its not pretending, in any case, to a full theological treatment of the various topics which it touches. They will explain why on some it is meagre,—on others diffuse—in all, popular and practical. Everything has been subordinated to what appeared to me most demanded by the circumstances of our age, and the necessities of a reflecting mind. May it be sanctified to the ends for which it has been written ! May you, dear friends, and many a reader besides, find in it food for thought, and nourishment for piety, unto eternal life !

CONTENTS.

PART I.

GOD THE FATHER.

	PAGE
CHAP. I.—GOD THE GROUND OF ALL EXISTENCE.	3
The Knowledge of God's truth, is the one thing needful for us here.	3
This knowledge is to be obtained only from the inspired Word.	3
And that upon our personal judgment and responsibility.	4
The essential points of it are summed up in THE APOSTLES' CREED :	5
Whose articles afford answers to our most pressing questions, as <i>limited—sinful—feeble</i> beings.	7
As LIMITED beings we have revealed to us :	
1. In the midst of Multiplicity, a ONE.	9
2. „ „ Appearance, a REAL One.	11
3. „ „ Change, a PERMANENT One.	12
4. „ „ Effects, a CAUSATIVE One.	15
Which One, real, permanent, and all-causative Being stands in close relation to us.	16
And therefore is to be contemplated with reverence—and with trust.	16
CHAP. II.—GOD THE ORIGINAL OF ALL INTELLIGENCE.	19
Our only right conception of God is that formed from analogy with the <i>Mind</i> of man.	19
Such a conception is,	
1. REASONABLE. Commended to us by <i>the consideration of our own nature</i>	20
Which obliges us to suppose Him who is the Ground of our <i>Intelligent</i> , and <i>Moral</i> , Being, to be Himself Intellectual and Holy.	22
2. SCRIPTURAL. Authenticated by <i>the declarations of Holy Writ</i>	23

	PAGE
3. NECESSARY. 1. For our preservation from the deadliest errors concerning God :— those of Atheism — Fatalism — Pantheism.	27
2. For the nourishment of right dispositions towards God :—those of Reverence—Communion—Submissiveness.	35
CHAP. III.—GOD THE AUTHOR OF ALL GOOD.	39
God as “ OUR FATHER ” exercises All-beneficent <i>Love</i> —All-providing <i>Wisdom</i> —All-Controlling <i>Care</i>	40
For, this term “ Father,” in Scripture, expresses the relation of a parent to his child—a householder to his family—a sovereign to his people.	48
And calls therefore, in return, for our love—gratitude—affiance.	51
CHAP. IV.—GOD THE LORD OF ALL POWER.	
Our conception of Might is twofold ; and God is “ ALMIGHTY ” in both respects	56
1. As <i>Force</i> , by his divine Life.	56
2. As <i>Influence</i> , by his divine Will.	58
And as such related to—and to be adored by—us.	60
What a <i>caution</i> this suggests to the rebellious !—and an <i>encouragement</i> to the submissive !	63
CHAP. V.—GOD THE CREATOR OF ALL WORLDS.	
It is by <i>Faith</i> that we regard God as the “ MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.”	65
And this assures us that all things were made by him—out of nothing—by the simple energy of the Divine will.	66
Whence learn—The insignificance of all created things—the Worth of the Creator’s favour—The blessedness of the New Creation.	72

PART II.

GOD THE SON.

CHAP. I.—THE OFFICE OF CHRIST.	79
The title “ JESUS ” expresses the Office of Christ as the <i>Saviour</i> —the Saviour whom <i>God has appointed</i> —the Saviour, <i>himself divine</i>	80
In which character he affords his people Deliverance from evil—Protection through their pilgrimage—Introduction to their promised rest.	85

	PAGE
CHAP. II. THE DIGNITY OF CHRIST.	90
1. The leading Idea indicated by the title "CHRIST" is that of <i>God's King</i> —the Sovereign of the world.	90
2. This title is assigned to Jesus as the reality of that idea.	93
This he was foretold to be, by the prophets—showed himself to be, in his life—was declared to be, by his resurrection—proved him- self to be, by his providential visitations from heaven—and will fully manifest himself to be, when he shall come again.	93
CHAP. III. THE NATURE OF CHRIST.	108
1. The meaning of the title "GOD'S ONLY SON" in the mind of those <i>by</i> whom it was used.	109
They employed it to distinguish him, from all human beings—all superhuman beings—all conceivable forms of created being—as equal in nature to God himself.	110
2. Its meaning in the mind of those <i>to</i> whom it was used.	114
How necessary this truth, to assure us of God's love to us—of our acceptance with God—of our triumph over sin.	117
CHAP. IV.—THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST.	121
Christ is "OUR LORD." 1. As the Teacher of his people.—2. As their Ruler.—3. As their Protector.	122
CHAP. V.—THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST.	135
1. The Fact commemorated in the words "WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY."	135
It is God becoming man!	135
And that in accordance with the inspired predictions concerning the Christ—the place, and the manner, of his birth.	136
2. The Reasons intimated for this fact.	139
1. In order to the <i>re-union</i> of the Father with his outcast children.	139
2. In order to their <i>restoration to the Father</i>	143
3. In order to their being <i>sustained in union</i> with the Father.	145
CHAP. VI.—THE DEATH OF CHRIST.	149
1. Its Historical Certainty.	150
As to time—manner—circumstance.	151
2. Its doctrinal meaning.	154
It was a sacrifice for sin—effectual to our reconciliation—accept- ance—confidence, before God.	155
CHAP. VII.—THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.	161
SECT. I. THE CERTAINTY OF THE RESURRECTION.	162
1. The Apostles had the fullest opportunity for knowing the truth concerning this event.	164

2. There was every thing in their character to assure us that they would state that truth. 165
 Its simplicity—straightforwardness—vehemence. 166

3. All circumstances conspired to prevent their being mistaken as to that truth. 168
 For their evidence is not that of credulous expectants—and it is corroborated by that of their adversaries—and of the general body of disciples. 168

4. There are striking collateral incidents which show that such an event must have occurred. 171
 These are, the manifest change of demeanour in the enemies of Jesus—in the general multitude of the Jews—and in the friends of Jesus. 172

SECT. II. THE SIGNIFICANCY OF THE RESURRECTION. 178

1. The *Spiritual Idea* of which it is the Symbol, is that of our Transference from a state of alienation to one of acceptance with God. 179
 2. Its *Moral Bearing* affects our faith—our energy—our patience. 185

CHAP. VIII.—THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST. 191

1. The *Fact* of this Exaltation. 191
 It was predicted by Jesus—was testified by his followers—was confirmed by subsequent circumstances. 191
 2. The *Doctrine* of this Exaltation. 194
 Christ's whole Interposition is illustrated by the figure of priestly Mediation. 194
 This Mediation comprises three functions: The offering of a sacrifice—the presenting the blood of the victim before God—the returning to bless the worshipper in the name of the Lord. 194
 Christ's *Intercession* is the fulfilment of the Second of these functions, in which character he is *all-gracious* towards our infirmities—*all-sufficient* for our constantly recurring needs—*all-powerful* to afford us patronage and help. 195

CHAP. IX.—THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST. 206

- The Church is waiting for the final developement of God's scheme of salvation. 206
 1. The CERTAINTY of Christ's return to complete this developement: "HE SHALL COME." 207
 Prophetic truth is as sure to us, as historical; resting on the same divine testimony. 207
 The second coming of Christ is assured to us by his Apostles—by himself—by the angels, upon his ascension. 207

	PAGE
2. The PURPOSE of Christ's return. "To JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD."	210
For Judgment pertains to him as the Christ, the King.	210
He will come again, to vindicate his royal authority—to punish all who resist that authority—to recompense all who have submitted to that authority—to establish that authority over all the earth.	212

PART III.

GOD THE HOLY GHOST.

CHAP. I.—THE NATURE OF THE HOLY GHOST.	221
Religious truth requires for its right apprehension, religious experience.	221
Our experience of CORRUPTION AND INFIRMITY prepares us for the Doctrine of GOD THE HOLY GHOST.	222
The Nature of the Holy Ghost is sufficiently intimated by his Titles.	222
1. As "the Holy Ghost" he is declared to be similar to our own spirit.	222
<i>Invisible</i> —but yet <i>substantial</i> —the subject of <i>personal</i> acts—and <i>distinguished</i> from those <i>in, or through, or by, or towards</i> whom he exercises those acts.	223
2. As "the Holy Ghost," he is declared to be <i>Divine</i> .	226
And there are ascribed to Him divine works—qualities—acts.	226
This subject, conjoined with what is ascribed equally to the Son, brings us to the Idea of THE TRINITY in Unity.	228
This Doctrine is <i>distinctly revealed</i> in Scripture; though it cannot be <i>clearly understood</i> by us.	228
But the God whom it declares to us is intimately connected with ourselves and our well being.	230
CHAP. II.—THE OFFICE OF THE HOLY GHOST.	233
This Office has reference to the Church—or body of the followers of Christ.	233
1. It consists in <i>the supplying to them the presence of their Lord</i> .	233
For the Holy Ghost was promised to be to the disciples invisibly, all that Jesus had been to them visibly.	234
Whence he is called The Spirit OF CHRIST.	235
And supplies the <i>presence</i> both of Christ, and of the Father.	236
See hence the essential Unity of the Godhead.	236
2. And this <i>by a real indwelling in their souls</i> .	237
1. This is a fact, <i>not, indeed, perceptible by the senses</i> .	237
For the Spirit, by his very name and nature, is super-sensuous	237

	PAGE
2. But yet which <i>commends itself to our Reason.</i>	238
For this presence of the Spirit cannot but be <i>inferred</i> from its effects : for those effects spring not from <i>ourselves</i> —nor can they be produced in us by our <i>fellow Christians</i> —and must therefore be traced up to <i>the inworking of the Holy Ghost.</i>	238
3. And is <i>assured to our faith by revelation.</i>	244
Which speaks of it as the special gift of Christ—actually possessed by his people—knowable by their inward consciousness—and manifest to outward observation.	244
How important then to ask, Have I this Spirit?	247
For it is promised, not to a body of men, but a <i>class of minds.</i>	248
CHAP. III.—THE WORK OF THE HOLY GHOST.	
THE CHURCH, THE SPHERE OF THE SPIRIT'S OPERATION.	250
The Church is the aggregate of Christ's followers.	250
Through which the Holy Ghost communicates the presence and grace of Christ.	251
1. Jesus designed that his disciples should constitute a distinct, organized community.	253
For he came, not as a Teacher only, but a Ruler.	253
And therefore ordained that his followers should be publicly consecrated to his service—be manifestly distinguished from the world around them—and act in concert as an organized body.	254
Whence he appointed for them Rulers—who should, however, have no authority but as they acted according to his will.	256
Promised them historical permanency—and constituted solemn ordinances of admission into, and continuance in, their fellowship.	257
How important then, is social religion !	258
2. Such a community was accordingly formed by the Apostles, in Jerusalem.	259
A community, definite and organic;—with sacramental distinctions;—cherishing the inspirations—exhibiting the graces—submitting to the authority—and diffusing abroad the life, of the Spirit of God who dwelt within it.	261
How similar the principles of the English Church.	266
CHAP. IV.—THE CHURCH, CATHOLIC.	
3. As the Gospel spread throughout Judea, and into other lands, other communities were formed on the same principles, and for the same ends.	268
The personal followers of Jesus formed <i>A Church.</i>	269
But soon they spread abroad, and founded other Churches.	270
Which churches were <i>co-ordinate</i> with the first Church at Jerusalem.	274
How false therefore the claims of the Church of Rome to jurisdiction over other Communities.	274
4. And it is the aggregate, or Sum of such particular communi-	

	PAGE
ties, contemplated abstractedly, as an ideal whole, under the presidency of Jesus as its Head, which is called in Scripture THE CHURCH; and in the Apostles' Creed "THE CATHOLIC," or universal, "CHURCH."	277
This is the sense in which the phrase "The Church" is used in Scripture—and in which its catholicity is defined by ancient writers	278
CHAP. V.—THE CHURCH, HOLY.	282
5. The end for which our Lord designed the formation of these several religious communities, which, taken together as an ideal whole, are called "The Church," is the more effectual communication of Himself, by His Spirit, to all the members of the same; with reference to which end, and the relation into which the Church is brought to Christ in order to that end, it is called "the HOLY Catholic Church."	283
SECT. I.—THE CHURCH HOLY, BY RELATION TO CHRIST.	284
This <i>relative holiness</i> is represented by St. Paul under the figure of the conjugal relation.	285
1. Christ has purchased to himself the Church.—2. He purifies it by his word.—3. He presents it to himself accepted through his righteousness.	286
Contemplate this relation of the Christian to his Lord, with <i>adoring gratitude—jealous care—earnest fidelity</i> .	292
SECT. II.—THE CHURCH HOLY, BY ASSIMILATION TO CHRIST.	296
Ideas are never fully realized in fact.	296
But the relative holiness of the Church forms the standard of approximation, for the <i>personal holiness</i> of its members.	297
The ultimate end for which the Church has been constituted, is the producing in its members the presence and life of Christ.	298
This is furthered by the instructions of his ministers—the fellowship of his people—the infusion of his Spirit.	299
CHAP. VI.—CHRISTIAN CHARITY.	313
The Work of the Holy Ghost in the Church consists in the production and nourishment of the three Christian graces, Charity—Faith—and Hope.	313
Christian <i>Charity</i> respects our relation to our fellow-Christians in "THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS."	316
This Charity comprises Christian Sympathy—Fellowship—and Beneficence.	318
SECT. I.—CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY.	318
This comprises unity of Sentiment—of Feeling—and of Purpose.	319

	PAGE
SECT. II.—CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.	325
This results from looking on Christ's people as "holy," and therefore holding communion with them, <i>for His sake</i>	325
1. <i>Scripture example</i> calls to this.	326
For it shows us that the first churches were <i>mixed bodies</i> —and gives no instance of separation from a church because of its alleged impurity, or want of discipline.	326
2. <i>Ecclesiastical practice</i> was ever conformed to this.	333
3. <i>Christian principle and feeling</i> demand this.	333
For these prompt to fellowship with the unconverted, on account of their <i>consecration to Christ</i> —and in order to bring them into <i>likeness to Christ</i>	334
SECT. III.—CHRISTIAN BENEFICENCE.	338
The Beneficence of the primitive Christians has been misunderstood.	339
It was not community of goods, but communication of all needful aid.	340
How essential the <i>principle</i> of such beneficence!	346
SECT. IV.—CHRISTIAN CHARITY A WORK OF THE HOLY GHOST.	
1. <i>It is no mere natural disposition</i> ;—either of good-heartedness—good-fellowship—affection—friendship—but <i>the divinely infused temper of Christ himself</i>	350
2. <i>It must be fostered in us by sedulous culture</i> : by cherishing a sacred reverence—patient forbearance—cordial confidence—towards our fellow-Christians.	356
CHAP. VII.—CHRISTIAN FAITH.	363
Christian FAITH respects our relation to God through the "FORGIVENESS OF SINS."	364
1. The Christian stands before God as relieved from condemnation.	365
2. Such a relation to the Father, he owes to that purification by the Son, of which his baptism is the symbol.	375
3. And a practical sense of this relation is a work of the Holy Ghost;—illuminating the mind to perceive the glory of Christ—reconciling the heart to appropriate the work of Christ—and subduing the will into union with Christ.	376
CHAP. VIII.—CHRISTIAN HOPE.	381
Christian HOPE respects our relation to the world to come, and "THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING."	382
SECT. I.—THE PERMANENCY OF THE SOUL, PROBABLE.	383
This truth respects our <i>personal continuance in being</i>	383

	PAGE
Which is assured to us by the anticipations of our human instinct —the conclusions of our intellect—the demands of our moral sense—the convictions of our religious belief.	383
SECT. II.—THE PERMANENCY OF THE SOUL, CERTAIN.	396
1. Death produces no interruption of what we at present enjoy ;— either of life—consciousness—or social sympathy.	396
2. It affords the introduction to what we at present are wanting in.	408
Immunity from trial—Deliverance from sin—Complete enjoyment of the presence of our Lord.	408
How essential is Christian experience to the very <i>understanding</i> — and still more the lively <i>Hope</i> —of the future blessedness.	412
SECT. III.—THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.	414
This truth respects our <i>future relation to the world</i> of which we form a part.	414
1. What is my body?—What my relation to it?—What the pur- pose for which it is given me?	415
2. Why will this body be restored to me? In order to the restora- tion of our relation to this world, at Christ's second coming.	418
For this is the time of the manifestation of his saints—of their renewed connexion with this lower world—and of their reception of such bodies as shall fit them for this connexion.	419
The blessedness of departed saints is, therefore, though complete, yet not completed—though perfect, not final.	422
SECT. IV.—THE LIFE EVERLASTING.	424
This truth respects our relation to the <i>final fortunes of the world</i>	425
For, “the Life everlasting” is the age of the setting up the king- dom of heaven, at the revelation of Christ.	425
And it comprises—the final perfecting—splendour—and perma- nence, of all things.	429

PART IV.

BELIEF OF THE TRUTH.

CHAP. I.—BELIEF, AN INTELLIGENT CONVICTION OF TRUTH.

The very title of our Confession of Faith, “the Creed,” calls on us to consider the <i>nature of that belief</i> which we therein pro- fess.	437
It includes, First, an intelligent conviction of truth.	438
Our convictions rest on two grounds: direct Perception—and indi- rect Conclusion.	438
Of this latter there is	
1. A Faith in the deductions of Reason; on which rest the truths of the first division of our Creed.	440

	PAGE
2. In the depositions of Testimony; on which rest the Facts of the Second Division.	441
3. In the Assertions of Authority, on which rest the doctrines of the Third Division.	445
How personal—and how practical, a thing is Faith!	447
CHAP. II.—BELIEF, AN HEARTY AFFECTION FOR TRUTH.	451
We are accountable for our belief, because Faith includes in it the affections of the heart.	452
On the state of the heart depend our attention to truth—understanding of truth—appreciation of truth.	452
CHAP. III.—BELIEF, A PRACTICAL SUBMISSION TO TRUTH.	459
As the <i>Relation</i> to God into which the disclosures of the Creed bring us, so are the <i>Duties</i> which we owe to him.	459
The Belief of God as our FATHER demands that we imitate him—hold communion with him—exercise a filial zeal for him. . . .	461
That of God as our REDEEMER involves a hearty closing with his grace—an adoring gratitude—a dutiful devotedness.	463
That of God as our SANCTIFIER requires that we count religion a spiritual work—confide in the Spirit as able to produce it in us—and diligently cherish his inspirations.	466

 ERRATA.

Page 165, last line, *for* and, *read* any.

209, line four from bottom, *for* thirty, *read* forty.

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

PART I.

GOD THE FATHER.

CREDO ut intelligam.—ANSELM.

Une des principales sources de la corruption des hommes, c'est qu'ils ne se forment point d'assez nobles idées de la Divinité. L'idée de la morale que l'on suit, et l'idée du Dieu qu'on adore, sont deux choses étroitement jointes ensemble.—SAURIN.

Religion does not demand new affections, but only claims the direction of those you already have, those affections you daily feel.—We only represent to you the higher, the adequate objects of those very faculties and affections.—**ALMIGHTY GOD** is the natural object of the several affections, love, reverence, fear, desire of approbation. For though he is simply One, yet we cannot but consider him in partial and different views. He is himself One uniform Being, and for ever the same, without variableness or shadow of turning ; but his infinite Greatness, his Goodness, his Wisdom, are different objects to our mind. Hence must arise various movements of mind, different kinds of affections. And this variety is just and reasonable in such creatures as we are, though it respects a Being simply One, Good, and Perfect.

BISHOP BUTLER.

PART I.

GOD THE FATHER.

CHAPTER I.

GOD, THE GROUND OF ALL EXISTENCE.

THERE are but two things, in the judgment of St. Chrysostom, which deserve to be the subject of the Christian's unconditional prayer. For other blessings he may ask, indeed, with copious outpouring of his heart before the throne of grace; though always with the limitation, "as they may be most expedient for me." But the sum of all that he can pray for with unhesitating faith, as at the same time indispensable, and sufficient, is comprised in those two final petitions which wind up our Liturgy, "in this world knowledge of Thy truth; and in the world to come life everlasting."

Knowledge of God's Truth, then, forms the one thing needful for us in this present world. And this because it is the only method and path of transit to the glory of the world to come. For thus says our blessed Lord: "This is life eternal to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent." And consequently this he goes on to intreat for his disciples: "Sanctify them *through thy truth!* Thy word is truth!"

Now it is just as being the depository of this Truth, that the Bible is of such infinite worth to us;—that it is called The Word of God. In those historical records which are

collected in that sacred book, we have preserved to us all that we can possibly know concerning the Truth of God. What he has breathed forth through his prophets—what he has embodied in the manifestation of his Son—what he has proclaimed throughout the world by his Apostles—this forms the whole of what the Christian can safely put his trust in, and resign his judgment to, as the infallible expression of the mind of God. No other declaration of doctrine or of duty can bind the conscience, because of no other can we positively affirm, Thus saith the Lord! The opinions of holy men, the practices of early Christians, may be more or less in accordance with this primitive—this only primitive—record; they may more or less develope the ideas of truth and holiness which in the word of God have been revealed; but it is only just so far as, in our judgment, they do accord with that primitive record, only just so far as, to our honest conviction, they do develope the ideas of the Word of God, that they can regulate our faith or duty. They may afford us help for the understanding of Scripture; they may show us the gradual expansion of the seeds of things embosomed in Scripture; they may exhibit the more settled form of the Institutions shadowed out in Scripture; but they can have for us no independent authority, they can claim from us no separate homage. No one, indeed, will undervalue the testimony of contemporary witnesses to the authenticity of a deed. No one would neglect the information which they may be able, from extrinsic sources, to furnish concerning the mind and purpose of the Author of that Deed. But still, the mere *opinion* of those witnesses what Judge will suffer to be put in as evidence? And the decision of the cause must always turn at last upon the wording of the deed itself, so far as, on the best consideration of all the probabilities of the evidence, it shall commend its meaning to the *deliberate*

judgment of the Court. But with the Christian, who must account to God, *in person*, and on his sole responsibility, for his beliefs, as for his acts—this court must be set up within the sanctuary of his own heart, this judgment must be pronounced by his own conscience, with no concession of appeal but to the supreme tribunal of the Lord of all. “Holy Scripture,” says our Sixth Article, “containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.”

And what is true of the more diffusive writings of ancient fathers, who represent to us,—or seem to represent to us—the sentiments and practice of the Church of ages subsequent to the Apostles—is equally true of those more concentrated Summaries of doctrine which, from those ages, have come down to us. These are of use to us as showing what was then considered the essence of Christian truth. They are specially important as proving how few and practical were the earlier articles of Christian communion. But the authority of those Articles, as regards our submission to them; the justification of the view they take of the essence of Christianity; all still depends on the degree in which those summaries commend themselves to us, as accurately collected from the Word of God, and rightly exhibiting the most essential elements of Christian truth. “The Creeds,” says our Eighth Article, “ought thoroughly to be received and believed; *FOR they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.*”

Now of these Creeds one of the most valuable that has come down to us is that which is called in our Articles and Prayer Book “THE APOSTLES’ CREED,” and is otherwise termed, as having been adopted early by the Latin Church, “The Roman

Creed." The use of such summaries of Christian faith is manifestly of very early date. To some confession of the kind the assent of Catechumens was required, before their admission by Baptism into the Christian Church; and hence such a Summary was called the Mathesis, or Lesson which formed the study of the pupils of the Church; the Symbolum, or Token of fellowship with the Christian Community; and the Canon, or Rule according to which the future sentiments of the baptized were to be regulated. The number of Summaries preserved to us, in different writers, shows that no universal form prevailed throughout the various Christian Communities, and that the title "Apostles' Creed" must refer, not to the origination of this Creed by the Apostles themselves (for this would have made all others unnecessary, nay presumptuous) but to its believed accordance with the facts and truths which they proclaimed.* We find this Creed, however, in the form in which we now possess it, in the works of Ambrose, as early as the Third Century after Christ. But its use in public worship was originally limited to the two seasons of Baptism, Easter and Whitsuntide; its recital at every celebration of divine service having been first enjoined by Gnapheus, Bishop

* "There is found in the New Testament itself (1 Pet. iii. 21 : 1 Tim. vi. 12), some trace of a confession of faith being made at baptism; and such confessions were afterwards enlarged so as to take in the main points in which Christianity stands opposed to Jews, heathens, and heretics. The object was to sum up in them those *essentials* of Christianity in which all the churches were agreed. Men assured themselves that the doctrine expressed in those confessions descended from the tradition of the Apostles, that it was *the* doctrine which those Apostles *themselves* had preached with their own lips, and in their writings; but no one imagined that the Apostles had composed such a confession word for word. It is in the *first* sense" (of agreement with the Apostolic doctrine) "that such a confession was called by them *κηρυγμα ἀποστολικον*, and *παραδοσις ἀποστολικη*. And it was the misapprehension of these terms which gave birth to the subsequent fiction that the Apostles themselves had literally set forth such a document."—NEANDER, *Geschichte der Christ. Rel.* 2. 535.

of Antioch, towards the close of the Fifth Century after Christ.

But it is the substance of this Creed which renders it so deserving of our attentive study. It sums up for us just those particular Facts and Revelations, recorded in the word of God, which are of the highest moment to our Spiritual welfare. It contains answers to questions which spring up unavoidably in the mind of every man who looks outward on the world in which he lives, or inward on the facts of his immediate consciousness; and it propounds to us those answers as matter not of speculation but belief — not as intended to satisfy all the cravings of the understanding, but as sufficient to still the yearnings of the conscience and the heart. And who can adequately tell the pressing nature of such yearnings? Who can adequately estimate the worth of answers, on divine Authority, to enquiries which affect our mental, moral, and spiritual, peace? We are in the condition of children surrounded by objects of wonder, struck every moment by things whose nature, connexion, and bearing on ourselves we cannot understand, and therefore asking earnestly, What means all this? The Facts of our position in the world we cannot shut our eyes to, yet we cannot understand. The necessities of our Nature cry out for relief. The instincts of our rational being press out towards something, which they know not, but which they “feel after if haply they may find it.” Every thing before us is imperfect, confused, fragmentary, mutilated. We want the completion of the design, the solution of the problem, the putting together of the parts, the restoration of the ruin! And all this is just what the propositions of the Creed, as summing up the Revelations of the word of God, respond to. Do we feel that we are *limited* beings? hemmed in in space, in duration, in power; with all things round us, also, fluctuating, unsubstantial, dependent? The Creed declares to

us a Being Unlimited, from whom we sprang, by whom we are sustained, and for whose use and glory we were formed. Do we feel that we are *sinful* beings—who cannot satisfy others or even ourselves, self-contradictory, self-condemned? The Creed declares to us a Being Holy and Divine, who came into the world to save us from this state of Sin. And do we, equally, feel that we are *feeble* beings,—in understanding weak, in will uncertain, so that even our best desires, our holiest purposes, fail of execution? The Creed declares to us a Being Wise and Powerful who can infuse new life into the mind, and heart and soul. GOD THE FATHER, who made us and all the world—GOD THE SON, who redeemed us and all mankind—GOD THE HOLY GHOST, who sanctifieth us and all the elect people of God,—these are the glorious Objects set before our faith, in these *most practical* Articles of our Belief!

And now then let us fix our attention on the First set of Facts presented to us by the world without us and within us, to the enquiries rising out of which the First division of the Apostle's Creed affords an answer, drawn from the authoritative word of God.

WE ARE LIMITED BEINGS. Ourselves, and all the world in which we live, are manifestly bounded, and hemmed in on every side. And yet amidst this limitation of *things* we find ourselves so constituted that we can assign no limit to our *thoughts*. The very finiteness of the world awakens in us, by the force of contrast, the idea of infinity. The current of thought, which has been set in motion by the objects of time and sense, cannot be restrained within the bounds of time and sense: it flows on irresistibly towards the ocean of the spiritual and eternal; and, dark as is that vast expanse before the mental eye, so that in vain we try to image to ourselves its Nature, we still are not the less convinced,—with a moral conviction—

concerning its Existence. We are *sure* that in the very existence of a world of sense there is implied the being of a world which is not of sense. The seen becomes to us the symbol of the Unseen—the imperfect of the Perfect—the finite of the Infinite—the restricted of the Absolute. In the midst of *Multiplicity* we are led to the Idea of Unity. In the midst of *Appearances* we learn to believe in Reality. In the midst of *Change* we recognize Permanence. In the midst of *things acted on*, each by each, we are obliged to travel up to the Idea of One original, universal, Agent and First Cause.

Look only at the MULTIPLICITY which this world presents to us. On every side, at every moment, particulars innumerable are brought before us; yet those particulars so connected with each other, so arranged in space and linked together in time, that we are forced to conceive of them as parts of one great whole. Looked at, indeed, in the detail, we count each object as itself a whole, possessed of individual being. Yet looked at in the aggregate, these manifold particulars go to make up in our mind the notion of an universal, for which universal the Reason supplies the Idea of a distinct and individual Life, a centralizing Unity, pervading, moulding, organizing all. And this Idea it is which is embodied in the speculations of the earliest Philosophers when they dream of an impersonation of the Universe—or of a Soul of the world—or of a central essence spreading itself out in infinite expansion—an inward life evolving itself in endless outward manifestations. This Idea it is which has maintained a secret influence even where the sense of Unity has been broken into fragments by the individualizing puerilities of Polytheism.*

* Τὸ Νόητον διήρηκασιν εἰς πολλῶν Θεῶν ιδιοτήτας: they broke up the one Intelligence into many and several individualities.—DAMASCENUS.

Sophocles (as quoted from Clement in Pol. Syn. on Deut. vi. 4.) attributes

For even where the deifying of the parts has gone to its fullest extent, and men have bowed down to gods many, and lords many, their very forms of speech betray a latent sense of an interior something, a Fate, a diviner nature, in the unity of which all gods, as well as men and things, are comprehended. "I hear the multitude," says an ancient Christian writer living in the midst of heathens, "when they stretch forth their hands to heaven, invoking the name not of gods, but God, and in their commonest forms of speech exclaiming 'God is great!'—and, 'God is true,'—and, 'If God vouchsafe this to me.' What is this natural language of the crowd but a confession of the Christian truth, there is One God?" *

And this Idea, then, it is, of which the full and clear enunciation is this depravation of the primitive truth to the avaricious cunning of interested men :

Εἷς, ταῖς ἀληθείαισιν, εἷς ἐστὶν θεὸς,
 "Ὁς οὐρανὸν τ' ἐτευξε καὶ γαῖαν μακρὰν,
 Πόντου τε χαροπὸν οἶδμα, καὶ ἀνέμων εἷας.
 Θνητοὶ δὲ πολυκερδεῖα πλανᾶμενοι
 Ἰδρυσάμεθα πημάτων παραψυχὴν
 Θεῶν ἄγαλμ' ἐκ λιθίνων, ἢ ξύλων, ἢ χαλκίων
 Ἡ χρυσοτεύκτων ἢ ἐλεφαντίνων τύπους
 Θυσίας δὲ τούτοις καὶ κενὰς πανηγύρεις
 Νέμοντες, οὕτως εὐσεβεῖν νομίζομεν.

"One, assuredly, only One, is God, who made the heavens, and the wide-extended earth ; the azure swell of ocean, and the mighty winds. But we mortals, deceived by greedy craftiness,† have made for ourselves images of gods, the solace in our afflictions, in stone, and wood, and brass, and gold, and ivory ; appointing to them offerings, and empty festivals, and fancying that such a work is piety !"

* And so the abstract terms *το θεῖον, ἡ θεϊότης, το ὕψιστον*, numen, all indicate this latent conviction of one and the same divine essence pervading all.

† "By the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Eph. iv. 14. "Teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." Tit. i. 11. "By this craft we have our wealth." Acts xix. 24.

ciation is given in the inspired word of God, when it declares the existence, amidst all the diversities of place and time and people, the multiplicity of men and things, not indeed of a generalized impersonation, or of a mundane Soul, or of a self-evolving essence, or of an universal, all-compelling Fate, but of a ONE, distinct from the universe, apart from the universe, of different essence from the universe, and over all the powers of the universe supreme. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is *One Lord*." Deut. vi. 4. "Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord he is God, in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else." Deut. iv. 39. "O Lord God of Israel, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth." 2 Kings xix. 15. "Thou art great, O Lord God; there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee." 2 Sam. vii. 22. "Thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art the Most High over all the earth!" Ps. lxxxiii. 19.

But look next at the *Appearances*—the ever-varying phenomena—which the world presents to us. All is mere outside surface. We find no substance; nothing which we can come at as the ultimate ground of any visible thing, the real substratum of the accidents with which our senses are familiar. One surface after another is penetrated by the sharp-eyed zeal of philosophical experiment—one fold after another is removed from the face of Nature; but all is surface still. "We do not know," says Newton, "the substance of anything. We see only the figures and colours of bodies, hear only sounds, touch only the outward surfaces, smell only odours, and taste tastes: we do not, cannot, by any sense or any reflex act, know their inward substances." And yet inward substance we are sure there must be! As the base of all appearance we assume it by a law of our mental constitution. Our consciousness of per-

sonal reality *obliges* us to recognize such reality in other beings. And thus in the midst of a world of mere Appearances—yea, because we find every thing to be but Appearance—we are led to believe in an unapproachable Reality, as the ground and the support of all.

And from this conviction springs the second element of the Idea of God. Of The One as at the same time REAL, Substantial, Living: not a notion, but a Being—THE BEING of all beings—the Life of all life. Hence, on the temple of Apollo at Delphos, that single word of deepest import, *εἷ*, “Thou art!” Hence, on the temple of Minerva, at Sais, that sublime inscription, “I am all that ever was, that is, that ever will be; and no mortal has yet lifted up the veil which shrouds me.” And hence the inspired declarations of the word of God, “In Him we live and move and have our being.” Acts xvii. 28. “In his hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.” Job xii. 10. “He is the living and true God.” 1 Thess. i. 9. “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come.” Rev. i. 8. “I am that I am.” “I AM hath sent thee: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial to all generations.” Exod. iii. 14, 15. O the mysterious reality disclosed to us in that one single term “Jehovah!”—the self-subsisting Being, who hath life in himself—who simply *is*—does not appear to be, but IS.

And how is our reverence for this substantial One increased when we consider further, all the *Change* which this world presents to us. We see in it no Permanence—nothing which abides—which we can call invariably the same. Every thing material is constantly assuming, with more or less rapidity, in hours, or days, or weeks, or centuries, a different form. “One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh. The

Sun also ariseth, and the Sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place whence he arose. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north ; it whirlleth about continually ; and the wind returneth again to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full : unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again." "There is no remembrance of former things ; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after." Eccles. i. 4—7. 11. "The fashion of this world passeth away." 1 Cor. vii. 31.

Such are the facts. What is the conclusion ? Is it, (what might seem to the superficial thinker the most natural and just,) Seeing that all things that we are acquainted with are thus transitory, there can be nothing which is otherwise than transitory ? Seeing that no visible thing is stable there can be no such thing as stability ? Is this, I ask, the conclusion of the reasoning mind ? Just the very contrary ! From the very observation of universal transitoriness we are forced to the Idea of a One not changeable, but evermore the Same. This is the conviction which the Oriental Philosophers express when they call God the Constant One, (ἑστῶς). This is the conviction so beautifully shadowed forth in the Arabian fiction concerning the patriarch Abraham. "As Abraham," they write, "was walking by night to the city of Babylon, he gazed on the stars of heaven, and specially on the beautiful planet Venus, and, Behold, said he within himself, the God and Lord of the Universe ! But the star set and disappeared : and Abraham felt that the Lord of the Universe *could not be subject to change*. Soon after he beheld the Moon at the full. Lo, now, he said, the divine Creator, the manifest Deity ! But the moon sank below the horizon, and Abraham said again, The Lord of the Universe *cannot be subject to change*. At sunrise he stood before the gates of Babylon and saw the whole people pro-

strate in admiration before the rising luminary. Assuredly, he exclaimed, Thou, wondrous orb, art the Creator and Lord of all ! But the sun too went down ! And neither, therefore, said the Patriarch, neither canst even thou be my Creator, my Lord, and my God. The Lord of the Universe *cannot be subject to change !*”

And this conviction does the word of God speak out when it styles God “the Ancient of Days.” (Dan. vii. 13.)—“the everlasting King.” (Jer. x. 10.)—“the eternal God.” Deut. xxxiii. 27. This, David so deeply felt when, looking round on what *appear* the most stable of all visible things, the deep rooted earth, and the abiding heavens, he exclaimed “They shall perish but thou shall endure ; yea all of them shall wax old like a garment ; as a vesture shalt thou change them and they shall be changed ; but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end !” Ps. cii. 26, 27. This, Jeremiah felt amidst the ruins of Jerusalem, “Thou O Lord remainest for ever, thy throne from generation to generation !” Lam. v. 19. This, Nebuchadnezzar confessed amidst the marvellous changes which had come upon himself ; “He is the living God, and steadfast for ever !” Dan. vi. 26. And this, Moses put his confidence in, amidst the mournful proof of human instability which the vicissitudes of the journey through the wilderness, and the passing away of that whole generation which came out with him from Egypt, forced upon him,—“Lord, thou hast been our Dwelling-place”—our abiding rock amidst the fluctuating waves,—“in all generations ! Before the mountains were brought forth” (yet what so seemingly fixed as they ?) “or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world” (yet what so constant amidst all change as they ?) “even from everlasting to everlasting, THOU ART GOD !” Ps. xc. 1, 2.

Yet once again—This One—Real—Unchangeable Being we are taught to recognize as the original, universal, Agent and First Cause, amidst the mutual influence and dependency which the world exhibits to us. Observe how all things are *acted on*; each by each. How they form an endless chain of which each link is alternately cause and effect, effect and cause. There is no such thing as a beginning in the world. All things are originated. We trace back from one product to another, and no where can we stop and say, Here is the ultimate, the absolute cause! But yet, through all this process, yea by the very means of it, we are learning to *suppose a cause*, as for each particular effect, so also for all effects taken together; we are strengthening by every fresh observation the necessary Idea of causation; we cannot possibly get rid of it; banish it in words, it starts up in our habitual feelings and acts;—and *A Cause*, therefore,—THE CAUSE of all other Causes we *must* believe! We have traced the river to its tributary streams, and the streams to the brooks, and the brooks to their feeding rills, and the rills to their bubbling springs, and we *must* go on to ask Where is the Source of all these springs? from what hidden fountain do they burst forth into light?—till the answer, (here again as before,) of Reason and of Revelation, is the same;—*that Source is God*; the all causative, all influencing God! “To us,” says the Apostle, “there is but One God, *of whom are all things*, and we in him.” 1 Cor. viii. 6. “All things,” says David, “come of Thee.” 1 Chron. xxix. 14. “Thou, even Thou,” says Nehemiah, “art Lord alone. Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host; the earth, and all things that are therein; the seas, and all that is therein; and Thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth Thee. Thou art the Lord, the God!” Nehem. ix. 6. “For of Him,” says St. Paul,

“and through Him, and to Him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever; Amen!” Rom. xi. 36.

Reader, can you have suffered your thoughts to flow in the direction which I have endeavoured to give them, and not find yourself borne along by them, as by a swelling current, to exclaim with fulness of conviction, in the first words of your Creed, I BELIEVE IN GOD!—I am sure from all that comes before me, in the world, and in myself, that there is—there *must* be a Being, the One amidst the Multiplicity which the world presents to me—the Real amidst its manifold Appearances—the Permanent amidst its endless changes—the First Cause of all its causes—whom the Scriptures, with their wondrous adaptation to the intimate nature and the deepest instincts of the men for whom they are written, *assume* as recognized by every mind, and proclaim to be adored by every heart, as GOD?

But O be careful how you make this most momentous acknowledgment! Be careful how you treat the deep conviction out of which it springs! It is an awful thing to speak of God! It is a solemn act to breathe forth even to your inmost soul the name of God! For it is no mere notion that you thus assent to—no abstract something generalized by the reasoning process of the understanding—no ultimate point of all the lines of thought. It is the real Existence of a Being with whom you are yourself inseparably connected,—by whom you are sustained,—in whom you live and move, and have your being. To believe that God is, is to believe that He is *your* God. And without such faith, all theoretical knowledge of God, all speculative assent to the proofs of his existence, is but vanity. “One does not say,” writes Newton, “My eternal, or My infinite, because these attributes have nothing of *relation* in them, but we say My God, understanding thereby his *relation to us*, as the Master

and Preserver of our life, the Object of our minds and thoughts." It is this which gives a *practical reality* to the idea of God, as of a Being whose existence is as certain to you as it is inscrutable; (so certain that the highest formula of certainty which men employ is, "As sure as God liveth;") and which existence has an immediate bearing on yourself, though his presence you can never trace. "Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand that I cannot see him; but *He knoweth the way that I take.*" Job xxiii. 8—10. O for some portion of that ancient Hebrew reverence for this inscrutable Ground of all things, which dictated as his appropriate title (that which we translate into English, God) "The Tremendous One!" That reverence which breathes forth in those thrilling words of holy writ: "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." Job xi. 7—9. "The mountains saw Thee, O God, and they trembled; the overflowing of the water passed by; the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high; the sun and moon stood still in their habitation!" Hab. iii. 10. "O Lord, *our Lord*, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" Ps. viii. 1. "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" Isa. vi. 3.

But let this conviction lead you not only thus to adore the Being you believe in, with a lowly reverence; but to *seek your repose* in Him, with humble trust. It is not the assent of the understanding only, which the truth concerning God demands; it is not the cold conviction of the reason; nor even

the warmest glow of the imagination, kindling with the grand Idea of the Invisible ; but it is the affiance of the heart. It is a *Being* you are recognizing when you say, "I believe in God,"—a Being who is the ground of your own being. And where then shall you find your place of rest but in this central point of all existence? If all around is multiplicity, diversity, distraction, where shall your spirit find its peace but in the only One? If all is shadow and illusion, where shall you be satisfied but in the only Real and Substantial One? If all is changeful as the surface waves of ocean, where shall you find repose but in the bosom of Him who, like the unseen depths of ocean, is for ever the Same? And if one law of action and reaction agitates the world, where will you hold, but on the "First and with the last," who is "the Rock, and his work is perfect?" Never but in God can the soul of man be satisfied, because no where but in God can it find the objective reality of its own best imaginings—the completion of what it sees to be imperfect—the supply of what it finds still wanting, in itself and in the world. "Whom have I in heaven but thee! And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee! My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever!"

CHAPTER II.

GOD THE ORIGINAL OF ALL INTELLIGENCE.

THE whole of religious doctrine may be summed up in the knowledge of man—of God—and of Christ as the Mediator between God and man.* And seeing that this last topic is so essentially connected with, dependent on, the other two, it follows that we can appreciate it justly, only in proportion to our acquaintance with those other two. Christianity rectifies the relation between man and God—supplies the means of establishing a spiritual communion between man and God—brings down God to man, and lifts up man to God; and how then can we estimate its worth without a due conception of the beings between whom it mediates? without a knowledge of ourselves and of our spiritual wants? a knowledge of God and his divine perfections?

But more—it is from acquaintance with man that we must attain to just conceptions of God. “The true knowledge of ourselves,” says our Second Homily, “is very necessary, to come to the right knowledge of God.” His Being, indeed, we may learn from things around us; but His Nature we must look for in the reflection, faint and imperfect though it be, which he conveys to us in our own souls. No one, indeed, has seen God at any time, nor can see him; yet to our conceptions he may, and must be, represented in the forms of that spiritual nature, that intelligent and moral being, the

* Or, technically stated, Anthropology, Theology, Christology.

prerogative of man, which as it is the only power by which we come to believe a Ground of all things, is also the only symbol to us of the character of Him in whom we thus believe. To have learned the Being of God, is only the first step towards that practical faith which is included in the first confession of our Creed, "I believe in God."

And therefore now we must go on to consider the Nature of this Being,—as not only the Ground of all existence, but the ORIGINAL, the Archetype, the Ideal, OF ALL INTELLIGENCE.

We must consider, here, how reasonable—how scriptural—how indispensable is this view of God : how it may be inferred from the consideration of our own nature—how it is authenticated by the declarations of Holy Writ—how necessary is our faith in it to preserve us from the deadliest errors concerning God ; and to nourish in us those devout emotions which constitute the essence of piety towards God.

See, First, how *reasonable* is the Idea of God as the Original of all intelligence—how we are led to it by *the consideration of our own nature*.

In the fourth chapter of the Gospel by St. John we have our Lord's authoritative declaration concerning the nature of God, that he is a SPIRIT. "God," says our great Teacher, "is a Spirit:" that is, he is to be regarded by us as of a rational nature,—mind, not body—inward and intellective, not outward and sensible ; and therefore pleased, not with external distinctions of place, and ceremony, and formal worship, but only with a worship "of spirit and of truth"—of the inward, rational, mind and heart and will of man. That which alone has any worth in us is our spirit—the mind—the essence of our rational nature. And even so, God is *Spirit*,—the primitive Essence of all rational being.

Now here the reference to our own nature as the thing known, by analogy with which we are to form our Idea of the Unknown, is manifest. There is a mode of being which we are acquainted with only by the evidence of our own self-consciousness ; which mode of being is distinguishable not only from the material body, but from the animal soul. And this mode of being, in this distinctiveness, is called by the Apostle Paul our spirit : “ I pray God, your whole *spirit*, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Our spirit is in fact essentially our Self, as distinguished from every thing, however nearly interested in it we may be, which is a part of us, but not our Self.* It is not, then, our animal life ; it is not our internal consciousness ; it is that which forms the hidden and inscrutable essence of our being ; which is permanent amidst all changes of the body, and all fluctuations of the mind ; and to which all the actings both of body and mind must be referred not simply as to their actuating power, but their substantial ground.

And here is the point of view from which our Lord would have us to look upward, if we would behold aright the Nature of God. As the human spirit to the limited sphere in which it dwells and acts, so is God, The Spirit, to the unlimited sphere in which He dwells and acts ;—not only the ground of all existence, but the intelligent, self-determining, and energetic Will which watches over, actuates, and regulates all existence ; inscrutable to us even as our own spirit is inscrutable, but to be conceived by us as exercising just those acts of thought, and feeling, and volition, which are the special modes of agency of our own spirit. Without such a conception, derived from such an analogy, our idea of God can never rise above the notion of a material force—or a vital energy—or a plastic essence. With such a conception, so derived, we rise into the scriptural Idea of *the living and true God*.

* See Bp. Butler ; Analogy of Religion.

And see how we are *forced* by the contemplation of our spiritual nature to ascend to an Ideal of that nature, an archetype and original of all intelligence, in Him who is the Ground of all existence. As when we look out on external things their very being assures us of a Ground of that being, and their very imperfections raise in us the Idea, and force on us the belief, of a perfection in that Ground of their being, which in the things themselves we cannot find;—a One amidst multiplicity, a Reality amidst appearance, a Permanent amidst change, a prime Agent amidst things acted on;—so when we look in to ourselves, the very nature of Spirit, with which we thus become acquainted, so essentially different as it is from that of external things, assures to us the existence of A SPIRIT who must be the Original of this peculiar mode of being; and the very limitations and imperfections which we discover in the actings of our own spirit, while they raise in us the Idea oblige us to the belief, of similar actings, in unlimited perfection, in that Original Spirit. What in us is dim reflection must be in Him immediate intuition. What in us is perturbed emotion must be in Him pure passionless serenity of moral feeling. What in us is feeble and self-contradictory desire and purpose, must be in Him absolute Self-determination, unchecked Will.*

And these conclusions are corroborated by the intimations of our moral sense. That moral sense is inseparable from our Spiritual nature. And the moral sense, however undeveloped in some, and repressed in others, yet in proportion to its vigour craves for and demands the Idea of One in whom its primary

* “Nec vero Deus ipse, qui intelligitur a nobis, alio modo intelligi potest, nisi MENS soluta quædam et libera, segregata ab omni concretionem mortali, omnia sentiens et movens, ipsaque prædita motu sempiterno.”—CICERO, *Tusc. disp.* l. 27.

“Quid est Deus? Mens universi. . . Quid ergo interest inter naturam Dei et nostram? Nostri melior pars animus est: in illo nulla pars extra animum. Totus ratio est.”—SENECA, *Nat. Quæst.* l. Pref.

elements exist in all their force and fulness. We love right and hate wrong; we praise self-consistency and blame self-contradiction; we are pleased with benevolence and disgusted with ill-will; we delight in equity and abhor injustice; we admire energy and disapprove of indolence. But nowhere in the world do we find these feelings satisfied; at no time in our own breast are they unmixed and pure. Can they be really destitute of all objective truth? Are they the Index of what has no where any full reality? Or must we not believe the existence, as we certainly possess the Idea, of a Being who is perfectly benevolent, and perfectly right, and perfectly just and perfectly energetic, and perfectly self-consistent, who in a word which indicates the combination of these several elements in one, is perfectly Holy? And such a Being then is He who is the Ground of all Being. Such is the Nature of Him who is The Spirit: not only the First, but also the Wisest and the Best of Beings—the only Wise, and Good.

Such is the Idea of God, as the Original of all intelligence, to which we are led by the consideration of our own nature.

See, secondly, how this Idea is *authenticated by the declarations of Holy Writ.*

For it is not only in the passage already quoted from St. John that we are taught this truth of the analogy between the Nature of God and the spirit which is in man. In the very first chapter of the Bible we have the same fact intimated to us. For that passage (v. 26, 27), which tells us that “God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,” and which thus reveals to us that man is different from all other earthly beings, in this one particular that his spirit is modelled after God himself; this shows conversely, that we can conceive of Him whose image we bear, only in the forms of that peculiar nature with which he has endowed us. If man was made like God, then

God must be conceived like man. The copy, however minute, is the representative of the original, however vast. And when the Original is beyond our ken it must be by looking at the lineaments of the copy that we shall form a just, though never an adequate, conception of that Original.

But again. You may go on to the New Testament and find the same truth similarly declared. For why does St. Paul remind the Athenians (Acts xvii. 28, 29), that "we are all God's offspring," that is, of his race and family? For this very purpose of showing to them the folly, as well as impiety, of their idolatry—of arguing with them that since man is of the race of God, God can be conceived by us only under the idea of man; of man, too, not as he is merely material, visible, sensible, body; but only as he is immaterial, invisible, intelligent spirit—and thus of proving to them that no material image, whether of lower creatures or of the bodily nature even of man himself, can fitly represent that Being who is like our *spirit*, and therefore, even as our spirit, an object not of sight, nor even of imagination, but only of pure Idea. Mark the argument, in St. Paul's own words: "In him we live and move and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." How precisely the same mode of argument as that of Jesus with the woman of Samaria! Neither Jerusalem nor Gerizim, says our Lord, is the more sacred place for worshipping God, for God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in truth. No form of outward image must be revered, argues our Lord's Apostle, for we are God's offspring, and must adore him therefore in that spirit which from him has sprung.

But further:—You find St. Peter also harmonizing on this

point with his divine Lord, and with Moses, and with Paul. In his Second Epistle, (i. 4) he tells us that for this end there are “given to us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we may become partakers of *the divine nature*.” But by the divine nature, in this passage, cannot be meant the Essence of God as the Ground of all being, the Infinite, the Absolute, the Eternal; but only the Nature of God as he is Spirit,—intelligence and will; to full conformity with which Nature our spirit, as being itself intelligence and will, may be raised up by grace. In the divine nature, in this sense, we were made: from the divine nature, in this sense, we have fallen away: to the divine nature, in this sense, it is the one grand object of the Gospel, through the communication of the Spirit of God by Christ, to raise us up again. Even as St. Paul writes to the Ephesians, (iv. 24) “Put on the new man, which *after God*,” according to his image and nature, “is created in righteousness and true holiness.” But if to be partakers of God’s nature, to be renewed after His image, is to be created in righteousness and true holiness, then is the Nature of God to be conceived by us as that *pure intelligence and will*, in which true holiness consists.

Once more. How strikingly—I had almost said how awfully—is this truth presented to us in the declarations of our Lord to his disciples concerning Himself—the man, Christ Jesus,—when he said (John xiv. 7, 9) “If ye had known me ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him and have seen him.” “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?” What, then, had the disciples seen? What did they know? They had seen the *spirit* of Jesus as breathed forth in his words, and energizing in his deeds. They had known the mind and heart and will of their divine companion and friend. And in that *spirit* of Jesus, as thus manifested to

them, our Lord calls on them to recognize the manifestation of God himself; in the perfectness of those qualities which belong to spirit—his benevolence, and his justice, and his energy, and his self-consistency, and his holiness in all its fulness,—there they were to behold, not indeed the Essence but the Nature, of the Father himself. But this spirit of Jesus was his human spirit, reflecting in its fulness the divine—the perfect image of the Deity which dwelt within it. And therefore from the human spirit, conceived as liberated from all limitation, and purified of all corruption, and raised up to all perfection, we are to conceive the mode of being of the Divine. In proportion as we conceive of unseen spirit, free, and pure, and perfect, we conceive justly, though not adequately, of God, The Spirit. And therefore, to have seen and known manifested spirit, as the disciples saw and knew it in the person of Jesus, the God-man, thus actually free, and pure, and perfect, was indeed to have seen the Father himself.

Nor is it in such specific passages only, but through the whole texture of Holy Writ, that this great truth is exhibited to us. Hence all its modes of speaking of God in language proper to man. Hence its attributing to Him perception, deliberation, feeling, moral complacency and displacency, determination, will. The whole Bible is to us an offence without this conception of God as Spirit. We must stumble at every step we take in going through it. We must admit the objections of its enemies. We must concede the Anthropomorphism, or assimilating God to man, which they charge against it as a delusive representation of God. Whereas the real fact is that just this Anthropomorphism is *the only form in which the true Idea of God can be conveyed to man*; so that immediately you quit your hold of this you plunge into the bottomless abyss, the “formless infinite,” of Pantheism, Fatalism, Atheism. The sharpest wits, the sub-

tlest minds, which think to strip our notions of God, of this Anthropomorphism, give to us in its stead, not a more spiritual but a more physical conception. Instead of elevating they degrade the Deity; and for the grand Ideal of intelligent *Mind* they substitute nothing better than the Ideal of an unintelligent world. Phytomorphism,—the assimilating God to vegetable nature, to a growth, a germ, developing itself indeed with an organic order and beauty, but without consciousness and without volition—this is the base conception which they offer us for the God of the Bible, the SPIRIT, in whose image we were made—whose offspring we are—to whose nature we may become conformed—who Himself was manifested in the flesh!

Such then is the Scripture authentication of this most reasonable Idea of God. See in the third place how *indispensable* this Idea is—how necessary that we hold it fast in order to *our preservation from the deadliest errors concerning God*.

First, from *the insolence of Atheism*. For it is not the absolute *denial* of God's existence, which constitutes this fearful evil, but the so looking on Him as if He were not an intelligent, conscious, Being, taking cognizance of what is passing in the world, and judging on the conduct of his creatures. "The fool hath said in his heart," writes David, "there is no God." And what means he by so saying? To deny a First Cause? To reject God as the Ground of all being? No! But to deny the intelligent superintendence of this First Cause over the world. To reject the notion of his seeing, judging, punishing the evil which is done therein. You see this in the Tenth Psalm. "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts. *Thy judgments are far above out of his*

sight. He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved ; for I shall never be in adversity. He hath said in his heart God hath forgotten : *he hideth his face : he will never see it.* Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God ? he hath said in his heart, *Thou wilt not require it.*" O this indeed is that practical Atheism, through which thousands perish. This is that fatal unbelief which deadens the conscience of multitudes who yet acknowledge the marks of Deity in the works of nature ; yea admire the sublime idea of an universal Spirit pervading all things ; but who have never cherished the awful conviction that this great Spirit is no mere vital breath diffused throughout the world, (the too common notion of Spirit, and of the spirituality of God,) but is a real, substantial, intelligent, thinking, willing, judging, acting Spirit : even as the spirit that dwells within your body, that thinks and feels and judges and determines, in yourself—that is your self, your only real and permanent self, distinct entirely from the animal life which animates your corporeal frame, and from the animal breath which with the dissolution of that frame exhales into thin air ! Whence is it that men feel so little of their responsibility to God, but from the disbelief, or the neglect, of this great truth ? Whence is it that what they dare not do, or even say, before the view of a human spirit like their own, because they would blush to be observed, condemned, abhorred, by that *real Being*—that this, I say, they will do, and this will think, when no human eye is fixed on them, no human retribution to be feared ; but just because they do not feel that *God is such a Spirit*—such a real, observing, judging being,—as their fellow man ?—because they say "*The Lord shall not see, neither doth the God of Jacob regard it !*" But O the full, convincing answer of the Psalmist to such a fatal error ! "*Understand ye brutish among the people, and ye fools when will ye be wise ? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear ? He that formed the eye shall he not see ? He that teacheth*

man knowledge, shall not He know?" The very powers with which He has endowed our spirit assure us that He must possess these powers in all their perfectness in His own! O then to feel responsible to God as you feel responsible to man! To quail before his face, as you would quail before the face of man! Though no Mind look at you through the imperfect medium of a human eye, God's glance is as ten thousand eyes! "It is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart: neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do!" Heb. iv. 12, 13.

But next, this contemplation of God as Spirit is necessary to preserve us from *the heartlessness of Fatalism*. There are many who venture not, with any distinctness, to deny the intelligent character of God—who will regard Him as putting forth mind in the contrivance of the universe, and in the wondrous adjustment of its several parts, and in the impressing on it the laws by which it is controulled—but yet lose out of sight one of the most essential attributes of spirit, in the sense in which our Lord calls God a Spirit, which attribute is WILL; not simply Intelligence, but Will; not simply a devising, but an energetic Mind; not merely the impressing of a law upon the universe, but the free, unshackled, independent exercise of his own judgment and determinations, and acts, with reference to the daily course of men and things throughout this universe. And thus, if they have really any definite notion of God at all, it is that of the ancient Stoics, that God has done his work—has thrown round every thing the charm of a divine necessity—has set agoing, according to unalterable laws, the vast machine of the world—and now reposes in a dignified serenity, while all things take their destined course.

But what, then, follows from this? this, to some vain imaginations so elevated a notion of God—a notion which does honour to his sovereignty, and sets him in impassible composure far above the petty troubles of this lower sphere? What follows, but just the destruction of all *practical belief* of God. For all practical belief of God depends, not on the bare acknowledgment of a First Designer and Provider, and Lawgiver, but also on a *Law-maintainer*—keeping up a constant connection between Himself and all related to Him. The idea of spirit, in our humanity, is the idea of Will—not merely of listless reverie, but energetic Will. But “God is a Spirit,” says our Lord. Therefore the very essence of God’s nature is Will: intelligent, wise, good, just, holy, but ever active Will. And because God’s nature is Will, there is, there can be, no such thing as blind necessity, an iron fate, an irresistible mechanism of things, and circumstances, and events, grinding its harsh relentless course, in one eternal round, above the controul of man, beneath the controul of God!

Yet just this denial of this ever-energizing Will of God has been the fruitful source of all the heartless scepticism in the world. Hence the disbelief of miracles; as if God could never interpose in his own world! Hence the questioning of Providence; as if petty events could not be objects of his care! Hence the discouragement of prayer; “as if, forsooth, the cries of human importunity could change the purposes of the Unchangeable!” Hence the cutting off, in a word, the connection between God in heaven and the things of earth, and the crushing of all faith, dependence, hope, in a living, present, condescending, and prayer-hearing God! “What must be, must be!” “We must just submit!” “Let all things take their course!” “Each man must endure his fate!” O, blessed be God, that we know better than this! O, blessed be God that it is written, “Whatsoever the Lord

pleaseth that doth He, in heaven, and in earth, in the sea, and all deep places." Ps. cxxxv. 6. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." Matt. x. 30. "The Lord will regard the prayer of the destitute, and will not despise their prayer." Ps. cii. 17. "Verily there is a reward for the righteous, verily there is a God that *judgeth* the earth!" Ps. lviii. 11.

But once more: The belief of God as a Spirit is necessary to preserve us from the *visionariness of Pantheism*. Pantheism is the misbelief that as all things have their being in God (Acts xvii. 28), God's being also is in all things. It confounds the uncreated essence with created existence. It makes the world but an expansion of God, or God but the impersonation of the world. And thus it destroys all living conviction of the individual personality of God, and either identifies Him with men and things, or, at the most, distinguishes Him from them only as the universal breath, the divine life which sustains and actuates them. And the mischief is, that just this view, which (for extremes meet) leads to nothing short of Atheism, is pleaded for from the alleged desire to maintain the *spirituality* of the divine nature! and to free our conceptions of it from all material and corporeal incrustations, all human limitations and infirmities! Its advocates tell us, that to conceive of God in the forms of sensible conception is to degrade him to the level of sense; and they overlook all the while that the analogy between God and man, which our Lord insists on, is not an analogy between the Invisible and what is *visible* in man; but between the Invisible and what is equally invisible in ourselves—the sole point of comparison being the *real, intelligent, and self-determining, substantiality*, as of the spirit of man, so also of God the Spirit, in whose image man was made.

And yet how readily is this misapprehension indulged, and God's intelligence, yea, reality, sacrificed, in the effort to save

his spirituality. A single instance will illustrate this; an instance which I draw from Abbott's popular work, "The Corner Stone," because that book bears all the marks of a well-intentioned, earnest mind. His object in the first chapter is to do away the "many false and absurd impressions which come up with men from childhood, and cling to them in riper years," as if heaven were a special place in the heavens, and God's seat a material throne, and God himself a "*visible potentate*" thereon. And in order to combat this notion of God's *visibility*, he destroys the Idea of his *personality*! and talks of Him—the Ground of all being, and the Original of all Intelligence—as "the wide-spread munificent power, pervading all space, and existing in all time!" Nay, in order to support the Idea of God's *spirituality*, which he seems to consider as simply the negation of corporality and visibility, not as the assertion of intelligent will, he makes shipwreck of the all-important truth of His *essentially distinct existence from the world*! "God is every where," he says. "The Deity is the all-pervading *power*, which lives and acts throughout the whole. He is *not a separate existence*, having a special habitation in any part of it." And see how with such a volatilizing of the Idea of God his very language necessarily alters, and from using for the Deity the pronoun appropriate to *persons*, "he," he slips, perhaps unconsciously, into that which is fit only for *things*, "it." "If," he says, "there were any quarter of the universe more magnificent than the rest, with a visible potentate seated there, that potentate could not be God. It might be a manifestation of the *supreme power*, but it would not be, and could not be, that power *ITSELF*, which from *ITS* very nature is universal in *ITS* presence." Yea, and this language, fit only for things, continues to present itself even when the great work of creation is spoken of! "In the structure of a solar system the Deity, invisible *ITSELF*, acts out *ITS* mighty power

and the unerring perfection of ITS intellectual skill. At the same time, while IT is carrying on these mighty movements IT is exercising, in a very different scene ITS untiring industry and unrivalled taste!" And again; "The Deity is the all-pervading, universal, and invisible *power*." And "this *universal Essence* must display to us ITS nature, by acting ITSELF out in a thousand places, by such manifestations of ITSELF as IT wishes us to understand!" Alas, for the near approach to blasphemy, in this language concerning this wondrous "IT!" Is this a lecture of Fichte, or of Schelling, or of Hegel, that we are reading? Can anything more thoroughly Spinozistic be culled from Strauss himself? Compare with the above his language, and point out, if you can, the difference. "God is the essence pervading all existence, the life animating all things living, the Spirit actuating all spirits, the principle and act of thought included in all thinking." And again: "The personality of God must be conceived not as an individual, but an universal personality: and instead of personifying for ourselves the Absolute, we must learn to conceive of him as that which goes on to infinity personifying itself." *

Can anything show to us more clearly than this instance does, the strong necessity of our forming to ourselves accurate—that is, scriptural—conceptions of the spirituality of God? We have not here worldly or imaginative poets talking in their

* It is refreshing to turn from such passages to the wisdom of a Socrates. "Socrates alone," says Bishop J. B. Sumner, "declares the dependence of matter upon mind without confounding their existence. So that his supreme Deity is not a mechanical agent, but a separate being. This superiority consists in the correct conception which he formed of *the personality of the Deity*; whose actual superintendence of human affairs, and intimacy with human actions, was his favourite theme. 'To his solid understanding,' says Xenophon, iv. 1, 'it appeared absurd to allow to the mind of man the power of governing the body, and to deny to the Mind of the universe the power of ruling the world.'"—*Records of Creation*, i. 197. 204.

mystic language of what they do not understand,* but we have one whose mind is given to the subject, who demands from us earnestly our full attention to it, because “it is not an easy one,” and who labours with all the energy of deliberate conviction to bring young persons “to try and dispel the illusion” which has cleaved to them from their childhood, and “thoroughly fix in their mind, so that it shall never leave them, that the Deity is *the all-pervading universal Power!*” No! God is not a Power merely, any more than your spirit, Reader, and mine, is a Power merely! God is not diffused throughout all being, himself no being, any more than your spirit is diffused throughout the body which it actuates! But God is substance, even as your spirit is substance,—not visible, indeed, not “form and colour,” not material, (what true phi-

* I refer not here to the heathen poets only, but to the equally Pantheistic lines of Poets bearing the Christian name. Take the single passage from Virgil, (*Æn.* vi. 724—731,) as given by Dryden, and compare with it the rhapsodies of Pope and Thomson :—wherein lies the distinction? Virgil says,

“ Know first, that heaven, and earth’s compacted frame,
And flowing waters, and the starry flame,
And both the radiant lights, *one common soul*
Inspires and feeds—and animates the whole.
This active mind, infused through all the space,
Unites and mingles with the mighty mass.
Hence men and beasts the breath of life obtain,
And birds of air, and monsters of the main.
Th’ ethereal vigour is in all the same,
And every soul is fill’d with equal flame.”

Pope writes, (*Essay on Man*, Ep. 1.)

“ All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul ;
That chang’d through all, and yet in all the same,
Great in the earth, as in th’ ethereal frame ;
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glowes in the stars, and blossoms in the trees ;
Lives through all life, extends through all extent ;
Spreads undivided, operates unspent.”

losopher ever thought these necessary attributes of substance?) but yet intelligent, conscious, self-determining; and while he sends forth his sustaining and all-actuating power throughout the universe, remaining in Himself, the One, real, personal God!

Such is the necessity of this Scriptural view of God, for our preservation from the deadliest errors concerning Him. Consider, lastly, how equally indispensable it is for *the nourishment of those devout emotions which constitute the essence of piety towards Him.*

Those emotions are easily summed up. They are readily known. For they are but the transfer to the Uncreated Spirit of those affections of the mind and heart and will which we have already learned to exercise, in a lower degree, towards the created spirits whom we mix with day by day. In the

And Thomson is scarcely better : (Hymn at the end of the Seasons)

“ These as they change, Almighty Father, these
Are but the varied God! The rolling year
 Is full of thee
 Since God is ever present, ever felt,
 In the wild waste, as in the city full ;
 And where he vital breathes there must be joy.”

How *essentially* different the *truthful* poetry of Milton, in the Hymn of Adam and Eve, (Paradise Lost, b. v.) Instead of deifying Nature, they worship God. Instead of dissolving the Deity in his works, they adore him as the Workmaster. The world is not Him, but His. It is not the substance, but the reflection, of the only Fair and Good.

“ These are thy glorious works, Parent of Good,
 Almighty ! *Thine* this universal frame,
 Thus wondrous fair ; *Thyself* how wondrous then !
 Unspeakable, who *sitst above these heavens*
 To us invisible, or dimly seen
 In these thy lowest works ; yet *these declare*
 Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.”

school of the family are those feelings first awakened which God calls for towards himself. But that which has had its birth in our relations towards Intelligences like ourselves, can never be transferred but to a Being conceived as an Intelligence like ourselves. The object towards whom their full developement shall take place may be infinitely above us, but still he must be, in this sense, similar to us. For the essence of the religious feeling is *moral*;—not mere trembling before physical power, or submission to physical necessity, or recognition of the presence of a physical Essence;—but Reverence for the majesty—Communion with the sentiments—Acquiescence in the determinations, of an *intelligent moral Will*.

For what is the highest style of *Reverence*? That with which we bend and cower before the untamed might of material nature?—the physical sublime?—or that with which we bow with elevating admiration before the quiet grandeur of a lofty Mind?—the moral sublime? And what then is the only legitimate feeling towards the great Supreme but just this higher style of reverence? Such as Job felt when he asked, “Whence then cometh wisdom, and where is the place of understanding? Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air? *God understandeth the way thereof*, and He knoweth the place thereof; for *He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven!*” Job xxviii. 20—24. Such, again, as Isaiah expressed when he said “Who hath *directed the Spirit of the Lord*, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment and taught him knowledge, and shewed him the way of understanding? Behold all nations are before Him as nothing, and they are counted less than nothing and vanity!” Isaiah xl. 13—15. Such, again, as Paul breathed forth in rapturous adoration when he cried, “O the depth of

the riches both of *the wisdom and knowledge of God*, how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For *who hath known the mind of the Lord?* or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given unto him and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things; to whom be glory for ever, Amen!" Rom. xi. 33—36.

And O the feelings of *Communion* which the devout spirit can enjoy with such a God, who is thus Spirit! The presence of God! What is this? Is it that only which pervades the material substances of the universe—which is the power of all powers—the life of all life? Nay, but it is the presence of *His mind to our mind*—or rather of our mind to His—the sublime conviction,—not that God is diffused through all things, but that all things, in their boundless range, and their minutest particles, and their slightest acts, are *present to God!* That His ken takes in all objects—his mind is cognizant of all thoughts—his heart embraces in its paternal vastness every living thing! Such a conviction as David expresses in the 139th Psalm, not of an all pervading breath, but of an all-present mind, who wheresoever we turn is *there* to us, because we are *there* to Him. "O Lord thou hast searched me and known me; thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; thou *understandest my thoughts afar off*. Thou compassest my path, and my lying down, and art *acquainted with all my ways*. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? and whither shall I flee from thy presence? How precious are *thy thoughts unto me*, O God, how great is the sum of them!"

And what is the *Submissiveness* which this view of God produces? Is it a forced reluctant resignation to inexorable fate? Is it the throwing ourselves, with a despair which makes a merit of necessity, before the terrible march of ponderous power, as the relentless Juggernaut of the uni-

verse? Or is it not the *acquiescence* of a *mind* in the grave determinations of a kindred *mind*; the homage rendered by imperfect knowledge to unerring wisdom; the surrender of a will whose impulses we cannot trust, to the appointments of a greater, wiser, better Will, which, even when we cannot understand we justify—when we cannot *see* to be intelligible we *believe* to be intelligent? Such a submissiveness as Job felt when he said “Touching the Almighty we cannot, indeed, find him out. But nevertheless *he is excellent in power, in judgment, and in plenty of justice*, and he will not afflict; *men do therefore fear him.*” Such as the Psalmist felt when he said “I know O Lord that *thy judgments are right*, and that thou *in faithfulness* hast afflicted me.” Such as Jesus has given us the perfect model of, when he closed his awful struggle in the garden with the quiet acquiescence of satisfied adoration, “Nevertheless not my will but thine be done!”

CHAPTER III.

GOD THE AUTHOR OF ALL GOOD.

WE have seen that a due consideration of the world in which we live will afford a moral demonstration of a One, real, unchanging, all-originating Being, as the ground of all existence—and that a knowledge of ourselves will force upon us the conviction that this Being has also an intelligent and moral Nature, as the Original and Archetype of all intelligence, “the only *wise* God.” And this completes the Idea included in the first confession of our Creed, “I believe in God.”

But this God we go on to acknowledge as “THE FATHER.” We recognize not only his Being, and his Nature, but his *Character* as it is displayed in his relation to the world—his Character as the AUTHOR OF ALL THE GOOD which in this world we see and feel.

For this term, “Father,” expresses the disposition which the Great Supreme possesses and exerts towards that universe of which he is the ground. We know already what is such a disposition from our own experience of the relation which that term points out. We know the heart of a parent towards his children. We feel that it includes an all-beneficent Love—an all-providing Wisdom—an all-controuling Care. And Reason and Scripture equally tell us that in the similar relation which God bears to all things there must be—there

is—a similar Disposition exercised by Him in all its perfectness.

Consider, then, First, the *all-beneficent Love* which God as the Father of all things must possess. From the same analogy which obliges us to conceive of Him as Mind and Will, we cannot but regard Him as *Benevolent and beneficent* in mind and will. Our own spirit is the faint resemblance of His. But even of our own spirit, in all its imperfection, yea corruption, Love is an essential element. And specially, of the exercises of that spirit towards our children,—springing from our own being, and similar to our own nature,—who knows not that paternal Love is the very life? So also, therefore, must paternal Love be the essential ground, the vital principle of all the thoughts and ways of God towards every living thing. You see this conviction shew itself even in the dim imaginings of untutored nature. The Indian calls the great Being, “the good Spirit.” You find it forming for you the distinctive title of this great Being in your own tongue:—“God” means “the Good One.”* And Scripture certifies its truth. The one most essential attribute of God’s character,—which he possesses as no lower being can possess—which forms his very nature—is this paternal Love. “There is none good,” says our blessed Lord, “but One: that is God.” Matt. xix. 17. “God,” says his Apostle, “is Love.” 1 John iv. 8.

But all Benevolence is essentially communicative. The

* Luther makes a similar remark: Cat. Mag. p. 409. “Hinc adeo est, quod mea fert opinio, quod nos Germani usque a majoribus nostris (præclarior, profecto, et pulchrior, quam ulla alia lingua) Deum (*Gott*) a bonitatis vocabulo (*Gut*) sermone nobis vernaculo vocamus, quippe qui fons perennis sit, et perpetuo scaturiens, affluentissimis bonis exundans, et a quo omne, quicquid uspiam boni est et dicitur emanat.” And the Scholiast on Odys. 8. 325 (Θεοὶ δωτῆρες ἰάων, i. e. ἀγαθῶν), offers a similar derivation for the Greek term Θεός. “Ἐόν, το ἀγαθόν, δισύνεται, ἀφ’ οὗ καὶ Θεός.”

very notion of love implies an *object* towards whom the feeling is exercised. And exuberance of love must find or make for itself a multiplicity of objects. Therefore the divine benevolence burst forth in the creation of this world, through which to diffuse its blessedness. We can imagine no other reason for creation but the overflowing of God's love—the self-communicating energy of goodness, which widens out the sphere of its exertion that it may therewith widen the domain of bliss. “The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.” Ps. xxxiii. 5.

And thus the Ground of all things becomes, in the very act of willing their existence, the Benefactor also of all things—pouring out over them the refreshing stream of his benevolence, and making them “very good.” “He has not left himself without witness” says St. Paul—he has sufficiently proved to us, as his Being, so also his disposition and character—“in that he *did good*, and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.” Acts xiv. 17. All the lustre spread over the smiling face of earth—all the life teeming in its most solitary regions—all the provision made for its innumerable tribes—proclaim with one voice, “good and gracious is the Lord.”—“The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.” Ps. cxlv. 9. “Thou openest thine hand and they are filled with good!” Ps. civ. 28.

And what then shall we say to the *mental* blessings which he has communicated to his choicest creature, man? What, to the rich patrimony of thought and feeling and volition which he has endowed him with? To *know* our happiness—to *reflect upon* the pleasure we enjoy, encreases it a thousand fold: and therefore He has given us a mind to look round upon the world, and inward on ourselves, and to talk with our-

selves about the happiness we see and feel—to tell ourselves that HE who sheds it over us *is good!*

And O what an enhancement of our bliss is this! We cannot thoroughly enjoy a gift unless we know and thank the Giver. The mind travels on from the unconscious blessing to find another *mind* that shall be conscious of our enjoyment of that blessing, and pleased with the gratitude which we would render to him. And this, God has provided for. He has given us faculties to know himself, the Giver of all good things—to recognize his hand in the creations of his might—to admire his wisdom—to feel his love—to adore his condescension.

And not only has he given us faculties for such a recognition. To those faculties he has revealed himself. Not only indirectly, by his works and the conclusions which our Reason draws from them—but directly, by his manifestations to the mind of holy men, through whom he has spoken to us “even as a man speaketh to his friend.”

Nor this alone,—through this same channel he invites and encourages us to speak to Him! to approach him as our Benefactor—to offer to him the sacrifice of thanksgiving—to pour into his gracious ear the full stream of our gratitude,—and to cry to him in lowly adoration, “Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee! Thus will I bless thee while I live! My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips!”

And here then is the character in which St. James exhibits to us God when he describes Him as “the *Father of lights*, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift.” Jam. i. 17. The influence of the heavenly bodies on this earth was a favourite topic of the heathen religions. The stars which shed

their gentle radiance through the darkness of the night—the moon walking in brightness—above all, the beneficent sun, scattering life as well as light over the world,—these were the objects of secret reverence, nay of open adoration ; to these, men, in their ignorant devoutness, ascribed the various blessings they enjoyed. “Men who were vain by nature,” says the Author of the book of Wisdom, “who were ignorant of God, and could not, out of the good things that are seen know him that is, did not by considering the works acknowledge the Workmaster, but deemed the circle of the stars and *the lights of heaven* to be the gods which govern the world ; with whose beauty if they being delighted took them to be gods, let them know how much better *the Lord of them is* ; for the First Author of beauty hath created them.” As the Sun to this lower world, so is the Father of all lights to the universe. As the earth owes to that material luminary the warmth which fertilizes it ; the splendour which cheers it ; the seasons, and days, and years which diversify it ; the laws which regulate it—so, as the Sun of suns, the Light inscrutable of which those orbs are but the faint reflection, the Father of the blessings of which these are only the distributors, the constant and unchanging essence of that beneficence of which these are only the often changing, often obscured, uncertain agents, the Scriptures point us up to God. God, himself all light, in whom there is no darkness at all—and pouring abroad his *all-beneficent Love*, in countless streams of light and life, throughout the universe. “With thee is the fountain of life ! And in thy light shall we see light !” Ps. xxxvi. 9.

But now go on to consider, Secondly, the *all-providing Wisdom* which God, as the Father of all things, exercises towards them. We look into the world, and we do not merely see scattered instances of goodness—we see a *systematic prin-*

ciple of goodness every where at work. There is a wisdom of benevolence. There is design. There is an end to which things tend,—to which they are evidently formed to tend,—and that end is their good; according to the nature and susceptibilities of each particular being,—their good. Amidst all the seeming anomalies in the actual working of things; amidst the too real evidence of corruption and disorganization; of nothing can it be said that the *design* is not benevolent—from nothing can we gather any other conclusion than that the purpose of the Designer was its good.

And what a subject is this, as evidence of God's fatherly care! That all the arrangement, the contrivance, the tendency to an end (and that a good one) which the world presents to us, is only *a transcript of the previously existing mind and purpose of God*—a working out of the eternal counsel of his essentially benevolent Will. To see that all things tend to a certain *end* in which they find their consummation, is one thing. To go back from this, and believe that all things derive this tendency from a pre-conceived and predetermined *purpose*, out of which purpose sprang their very commencement, is another. The one is the admission even of the godless Pantheist or Necessarian, who confesses that the tendency and workings both of nature and events exhibit the development of the *Idea* of good; but who there stops. The other is the belief of the Christian Theist, who can form to himself no notion of an *Idea* without an intelligent *Being* whose *Idea* it is, and through whose conscious purpose that *Idea* is wrought out into act. And why does he hold fast this belief? Because just this conclusion is that to which he comes, and finds that he correctly comes, with reference to similar phenomena in the daily intercourse of life. We see before us the workings of *human action*, as well as of things and circumstances. We observe such action tending to certain ends,

adapting, combining, regulating itself towards the attainment of those ends. And what do we infer from these appearances of systematic operation? Do we absurdly talk of the self-regulation of these acts? Or of the inherent disposition of the members of the body which have been employed in them, to exert themselves in such a way, to such results? Or do we not immediately and unavoidably reason onward from the things designed to a Designer—from human actions to a human *Agent*—from the end accomplished by those actions to the *intelligent purpose* of that *Agent*—and from the *degree* of method manifested in those actions, to the degree of intelligence of that agent, whose pre-conception, pre-determination, and pre-volition have produced the workings of those bodily members, and the results which by those workings are accomplished in the world? And what other evidence either of the being, or the personality, of human Agents, have we but this? Who knows anything of his fellow men, but from their external manifestations? Who knows anything of the intelligence of his fellow men, but from the marks of intelligence visible in those manifestations? Who knows that there is besides himself any other real, thinking, purposing and willing being at all, but from the outward marks of such reality, thought, purpose, will, which in the *phenomena* of life are manifested? And if then the phenomena of human action bring us unavoidably to the recognition of a Being as the Agent of those phenomena, which Agent we have never seen—of whose existence and whose nature, and whose character we have no evidence but in those phenomena; what shall all the similar phenomena in the world, and all the similar marks of wise contrivance and design which those phenomena exhibit to us, — what shall these bring us to but to the recognition of a greater Being, as the Agent of those phenomena; though such an Agent no one hath seen, nor can see, and even though we had for His exist-

ence, nature, character, no other proof but that which, in the systematic workings of this wondrously adapted world, is furnished to us? As sure as we believe that there are men, so surely must we believe there is a God. As surely as we recognize intelligence, design and purpose in men, so surely must we recognize similar intelligence, design and purpose in God. And as surely as we see a *good* end, as the object of the things designed, so surely must we acknowledge in the Designer himself the *quality of goodness*—of pre-disposing Love—of all-providing Wisdom. “O Lord how manifold are thy works! *in wisdom hast thou made them all*: the earth is full of thy riches!” Ps. civ. 24. “The Lord of hosts is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.” Isa. xxviii. 29. “He hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.” Jer. x. 12. “The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew!” Prov. iii. 19, 20.

Observe now, in the Third place, how God is set before us as the Father of his universal family, as exercising towards it an *all-controuling Care*.

It is not in things or circumstances, taken by themselves alone, that a benevolent purpose is discernible, but more especially in their combination and co-working. And what strikes us in the world of nature and events is just this combination and co-working,—not merely their original contrivance, but their hourly maintained co-operation—by means of which, results impossible through any *particular* thing, at any *given* time, are brought out by the harmonious working of a vast system of things through a long course of time. Nothing results from the separate virtue of any one thing or circum-

stance, but from the *bringing together*, the accurate, apt adjustment, of many things and many circumstances;—things, too, often in themselves apparently discordant, and circumstances often apparently counteractive of each other. Facts, for example, occur in history whose results reach manifestly beyond—nay often contrary to,—the purpose of the particular Actors in them, and yet at the same time have such evident design in them, are so connected with something that has gone before, and so productive of something which comes after, that *A Purposer*, by whom they have been disposed and brought about, we cannot shut our eyes to. They cannot be chance. They cannot be mere mechanical result. They must be the arrangement of a conscious and all-regulating Mind, which has intended—nay prepared—them, long before. Take only the great fact of Christ's appearing. It was when "the fullness of times was come!" It was just at the point of time in which all the lines of prophecy centred. It was just in the age and state of the world when separate nations had begun to lose themselves in the all-absorbing influence of Rome—when separate superstitions had begun to totter under the weight of their own decay—when the minds of multitudes were awakened to enquiry, and therewith their consciences were roused to anxiety; and all the strong necessities of their moral nature, the need of pardon for guilt, deliverance from corruption, power for virtue, began to be most pressingly felt. It was when the longings of God's ancient people were stretched out to their extremest intensity. It was when the universal sigh of a sin-oppressed world was breathed forth with the deepest earnestness. And then Christ came! And were not these adjustments the work of a presiding Mind? And could this collocation and combination of things and circumstances, have taken place but through the all-controuling Care of One who saw the end from the beginning, and from

ancient times the things that were not yet done: saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure?

Now, just this controuling all things according to a pre-conceived design, just this actual working out by paternal Care, what had been willed by paternal Love, and contrived by paternal Wisdom, is what the Scriptures represent to us under that favourite image of a FATHER by which they indicate the character of God towards all things. The employment of this image, to this end, is frequent and striking. It is used to assure us of the watchful superintendence and controul of God over all things, as similar to the Care of a Parent over his children—of a Householder over his family—of a Sovereign over his people.

Even as a *Parent over his children*, so God watches over all things for good. How touchingly is this assured to us by our blessed Lord, when he warns his disciples against unnecessary care concerning their earthly interests, “for *your heavenly Father* knoweth that ye have need of all these things.” Matt. vi. 32. He knows your wants. That is enough. That so knowing he will provide for them, you may confidently trust from the very fact implied in the epithet I use—he is your “*Father!*” So again, when he encourages them to be bold in confessing his name, whatever evils it might bring upon them. For, “are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall to the ground without *your Father.*” Matt. x. 29. And when he would animate them to persevering prayer, from the assurance of being heard and answered, it is to their own consciousness and feelings in the parental relation that he refers them, as the all-sufficient ground for trusting in God’s care. “If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall *your heavenly Father* give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” Matt. vii. 11.

But next ;—as a *Householder* over his family, so God cares for all things. How beautiful that comparison in the 104th Psalm : “ These wait all upon thee, that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them they gather : thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good.” The Lord, in the midst of his creatures, with a Father’s bountifulness distributing to all, the food convenient for them ! How striking such an image ! How should it encourage us to look up to him—to wait on him—with patient expectation, in every time of need ! “ The eyes of all wait on thee,” says David in another place, “ and thou givest them their meat in due season : thou openest thine hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.” And it is in this character of the Head of the family, watching over its interests, providing for its support, maintaining with authority its order, that the term “ *Father*” is applied by Jeremiah to even the conjugal relation, and is employed, like that of “ *Lord*,” to indicate the care and guardianship which the husband exercises over the wife, and the corresponding dependence and reverence which is due from the wife to the husband.* Even as the very term “ *Husband*” means similarly “ *Lord and Protector*”—expresses the relation of the head of the family to all the members of it, (and therefore specially to her who is their mistress and representative) as the connecting link of the whole community, the *bond* by which they are joined together and kept in, and sustained as one. “ *Husband*” is literally “ *Houseband* ;” the band of the house—the encircling girdle which, while it *binds together*, also *binds in*, all the members of it. Whence God, considered as the *Husband* of his people, is also called their *Father*. For when he has reproved the Jews (Jer. iii. 4) for having acted towards Him like a wife who has departed from her husband, he goes on to express his hope of their repent-

* Cf. 1 Peter iii. 6. “ Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him, Lord.”

ance, by asking, "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, *My Father!* Thou art the guide of my youth!" Wilt thou not return into the bonds which thou hast broken, and recognize in me again the Husband of thy youth *—thy guardian friend and Lord? Yes! even as the husband to the wife, so is the Almighty God to his great family! "Fear not," says the Prophet Isaiah, (liv. 5) "for thou shalt not be ashamed, neither be thou confounded, for thou shalt not be put to shame, for *thy Maker is thy Husband*; the Lord of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer"—thy guardian, whose office it is to attend to all thy interests †—"the Holy One of Israel!"

But then the title of "Father" comprises in its signification not superintendence only, and protection, but effectual control. Even as a *Sovereign over his people*, so God controls and governs all things for their good. For this title of Father is given in Scripture, further, to *Kings and Rulers*, on this very account. Thus the Lord says concerning Eliakim, when he intended to make him prime minister in the place of Shebna the Scribe, "I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will *commit the government into his hands*, and he shall be a *Father unto the inhabitants of Jerusalem*, and to the house of Judah." Isa. xxii. 21. While it is predicted concerning the Messiah, with reference to just this all-controlling power which should be put into his hands for the fulfilment of his kingly office; "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, *the Everlasting Father*," the King of whose government there should be no end—"the Prince of Peace." Isa. ix. 6. And thus, then, he who is our God, is in this sense our FATHER also! "He sitteth *in the throne* judging right." Ps. ix. 4. "His eyes behold, his

* Cf. Isaiah liv. 6 : Malachi ii. 14 : Prov. v. 18.

† "Thy *Goel*." Thy Protector. Comp. Ruth iii. 13, "Let him do *the kinsman's* (the *Goel's*) part," and ch. iv. 1—13,

eyelids try, the children of men." Ps. xi. 4. Nothing in the wide domain of nature can take place without his knowledge and permission. All things are subordinated to his will. The same eternal Mind which is all love towards you, and all care for you, is also all authority and control, to carry out that love, to exercise effectually that care. Your God is Father, Guardian, Friend, Protector, King !

And O then what a call is here for us to exercise towards God "THE FATHER" all the best affections of the heart—love—gratitude—affiance !

For if we get the full conviction that the Ground of all things, who is in Nature, Spirit like ourselves, is also in Disposition and character our Father, what a warrant is here for admiring *Love*. Jesus demands of us, as the first and great commandment, "Thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy mind, and all thy soul, and all thy strength." But we cannot love a quality—an idea—a being, however real, who does not possess a *mind and disposition loveable*. Love is founded on esteem. And esteem is admiration of *character and will* : not of *acts*, not even of *faculties*, taken alone, but of the *disposition* of which those acts are the manifestation, the Will to which those faculties are made subservient. It is not then the Being of God—it is not the doings of God—it is the *character of God*, as the *Father of all things*, which only we can love. And character is personality ; and therefore we can love God only as we feel his personality. And I am sure if we could analyse that want of love which is exhibited towards the Author of our being, we should find that much of it results from the want of any living conviction of this personality of God as the Father of all things—endued with a Father's mind, exercising a Father's care, affording a Father's protection. Do you, my reader, thus love God ? Do you

admire him as not merely the greatest, but *the best* of beings—in his *perfect moral will*, the *best* of beings? the good, the wise, the holy—whose *power* would be only terrible, but for its subordination to his *Fatherly love*—whose relation to yourself would be only tremendous, but for the assurance of his *Fatherly love*? Remember how Jesus delighted in the recognition of this character of God—how he exulted in calling the Supreme his *Father*—how he turned to Him repeatedly the glance of *moral admiration*, rejoicing in the goodness, and the wisdom, and the holy sovereignty of his Will. “I thank thee, O *Father*, Lord of heaven and earth, that having hid these things from the wise and prudent, thou hast revealed them unto babes! Even so, *Father*, for so it seemed good in thy sight!” Matt. xi. 25, 26. “O *righteous Father*, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me, and I have declared to them thy name” (thy character) “and will declare it!” John xvii. 25, 26.

And, then, too, our *Gratitude*! How closely is this connected with the view of God’s disposition towards us as our Father! It is not when good is done to us, no one can conjecture why—it is not when good comes to us, as it were, by chance, and without *intention* on the part of the producer of that good,—that we can feel *gratitude* for that good. It is only in proportion as we believe *the intention* on the part of the producer to have been the doing us good, that gratitude can spring up. Even towards a *person*—towards a fellow-man—we feel no gratitude but as we know the *disposition of his mind towards us*. Does the master thank his servant, asks our Lord, for acts of mere servile obedience? I trow not. Luke xvii. 9. Acts done for the individual’s good and not for ours, with purpose and intention for ours, we are not grateful for. Gratitude presupposes a Will, and further a

design and purpose in that Will, to benefit us by its acts. And how much more impossible then is it to feel gratitude to *things*—inanimate, impersonal things! We may observe all manner of Good in unintelligent nature; we may admire the wondrous life pervading all things, and distilling from them, as it were, this good; we may avail ourselves with joy of the many blessings which by the organic working of this unconscious life are thrown off upon our path; but how can we feel—who ever thought of feeling?—Gratitude to *the things themselves* which thus delight us? to the organization by which they are thrown off? to the life which has distilled them? to the nature which men personify as the possessor of that life? No one! Not even the most imaginative of minds—except perhaps on paper! Even the ever seething warmth of pagan idolatry pours forth its gratitude not to things and events, but to the gods whom it imagines to be actuating those things, and directing those events: to the particular deity of each particular blessing; or to the goddess Nature as the Impersonation of all things taken together, or the goddess Fortune as the Impersonation of all events combined. And would the Christian therefore know the *practical* emotion of a living gratitude, he must recognize God in all his blessings; not talk vainly of “nature,”—not of “providence”—not of “heaven,” and “heaven’s gifts,” but carry up his heart with all its personal emotions to adore that personal *Father* of all mercies, who has designed and who provides and orders, all things for our good. So shall we indeed “love Him who first loved us!”

And what shall we say, finally, of *Affiance*? Can anything require so thorough a conviction of the personal disposition of the Being towards whom we exercise it as Affiance? a disposition of paternal goodness, spontaneous, steady, unchangeable? Whence the Apostle James when he would encourage

his readers to trust that no temptation shall be suffered to overpower them, does not content himself with representing God as the Father of lights from whom comes nothing but good and perfect gifts—and with reminding them, moreover, that he has neither variableness nor shadow of turning, but tells them, further, “*of his own will* begat he us with the word of truth that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures:”—the Being whom men would charge with bringing temptation on you, has the *freest and most spontaneous* disposition of love towards you; which, having no ground but in his own essential benignity, can by no outward influence be changed. And who can expect such *constancy* of beneficence from any other source but God? Are *things* unchangeable? Is Nature constant? Are the heavens invariable? Are men to be depended on? No! It is only He who is above all things, and different from all nature, and higher than the heavens, and holier than men, of whom we can say with full affiance, “*Though my father and my mother forsake me, yet the Lord will take me up.*” It is only to him who is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever, that we can cry “Thou art my FATHER, my God, and *the Rock of my Salvation!*”

CHAPTER IV.

GOD THE LORD OF ALL POWER.

THERE are many subjects in the word of God which almost forbid our talking about them. Their grandeur awes us into silent adoration. We can, at most, speak of them only in a reverential whisper. We gaze with trembling on the “great sight” which they set before us, and we seem to hear an awful voice of warning, “Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground!”

And above all other subjects is this the case when we attempt to think and speak of God. Even as that Heathen Sage, who had the *feeling* of true piety, whatever the limitation of his knowledge, we ask again and again, when questioned about God, for *time*: we retire into the depths of our spirit: we return: again we pause—retire—return—and thus by the very symbol of this awestruck hesitation we proclaim that “man by searching cannot find out God.”

But when we have the guidance of authoritative revelation from God himself—and especially when our subject of meditation is not God in his inscrutable essence, but in his manifested character, in relation to ourselves—then, though the mind may sink, the *heart* will be elevated by even the most imperfect contemplation of the Divine Majesty. We may *adore* what we can never comprehend.

Such hesitation is met by such encouragement when we attempt to meditate on that first great Article of the Christian

Faith, which forms the first division of the Apostles' Creed. Who can say "I believe in God the Father, Maker of heaven and earth?"—who can endeavour to tell himself what he really *means* by such a confession of a One, real, eternal Being, the Ground of all existence—the Original of all intelligence—the Author of all good—the Lord of all power—the Creator of all worlds—without a frequent pause of holy Awe?

May such an Awe pervade our minds while we proceed to look on God, as THE LORD OF ALL POWER—"the Father ALMIGHTY!"

Now, the conception that we form of Might is twofold: that of *physical* and that of *moral* superiority—*Force*, and *Influence*. And all that we see and feel of either of these properties in ourselves and in the world around us, is surpassed beyond comparison, by Him who is the Author of ourselves and of that world. This is the Idea of God's *All-mightiness*.

We have some experience *in ourselves* of physical Might, of FORCE. We find a power to move at will the members of our body. We are able by this movement to communicate motion to inanimate things. Within a certain range we can actuate, control, *enforce* reluctant matter according to our will. And what one man can do in some degree, combinations of men can do still more effectually. Men marvel at the Might of their own will.

But all this physical power of Man we find surpassed and overcome by the greater physical power which lives in *the world around us*. In the elements of nature, in the sweep of the tempest, the rushing of the waves, the pressure of the atmosphere, even the mere passive resistance of inert matter, the boasted force of man is met by a counterforce uncontrollable and irresistible. Man as compared with nature is but a reed shaken with the wind. The whole race of men are but

as vapour scattered by the storm-blast. "The multitude of the mighty is like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones as chaff that passeth away."

But, out of all proportion as the powers of man are below the powers of nature, so, even to infinity, are the powers of nature below the All-mighty power of God. This is the comparison which the Scriptures delight to make, in such varied and sublime language. This is the train of thought, by passing along which we may come, not indeed to any positive conception of the Might of the Most High, but to some practical feeling of its irresistible and all-controlling force. How grandly is this done by David in the 93rd Psalm. "The Lord reigneth; he is clothed with Majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength wherewith he girdeth himself." And how shall we appreciate this majesty? By what standard shall we measure this strength?—Look round upon the earth, that emblem of *passive strength*, which has stood firm for ages, based on the eternal rocks—that world is established that it cannot be moved,—but God's throne has been established long before:—"Thou art from everlasting!" And look again upon the raging sea with all its *active energy*—its roaring waves, its mighty surge: "the floods have lifted up their voice, the floods lift up their waves,"—but "the Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea than the mighty waves of the sea!" All that has ever been experienced of the powers of nature—all that can be conceived of their possible combined and concentrated force—all the dread sense of human insignificance and helplessness, that such experience and such conception can impress upon the mind—all this serves but as the *emblem*—the faint, inadequate emblem—of the All-mighty power of Him who made, upholds, controls them all. "In his hands are the deep places of the earth, and the strength of the hills is his." Ps. xcv. 4. "He looketh on the earth and it

trembleth; he toucheth the hills and they smoke." Ps. civ. 32, 33. "The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at his reproof." Job xxvi. 11. "He removeth the mountains and they know not: he overturneth them in his anger. He shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble." Job ix 5, 6. "He putteth forth his hand upon the rocks; he overturneth the mountains by the roots. He bindeth the flood from overflowing." Job xxviii. 9, 10. "Lo, these are but parts of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him! The thunder of his power who can understand?" Job xxvi. 14. "Ascribe ye strength unto God! his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds. O God thou art terrible out of thy holy places!" Ps. lxviii. 35.

But there is yet a nobler, if not a more awful, conception of Power, which we gain from the experience and observation of *Moral* superiority—of the Might of INFLUENCE. We know something, from ourselves, of the mysterious efficiency of Will: of the determinations of our own spirit; and of the skill, the power of combination, the perseverance, with which it can bring out those determinations into act, mocking at difficulty and trampling over opposition. We see this achieved not only by each man, in his limited sphere of action, for himself; but also by one man over another, in society; and by all men over each. Who has not stood awestruck at the contemplation of some daring dominant Will, coercing thousands by its voice—directing millions by its nod? And who has not felt a deeper emotion still at witnessing that more mysterious, because more purely mental, Influence which works as if by enchantment on the sentiments and passions of mankind, not forcing, by an ostentatious strength, but winning and moulding by a secret plastic energy, the wills of other men, to serve its purposes and do its work?

And when we go on even to brute existence, and inanimate

nature, and see how Mind can enlist into its service even opposing forces, and convert the very energies of matter into instruments for controlling matter, and for subjugating it to human sway ; nothing, surely, in mere physical strength, nothing even in the overwhelming force of earth and sea and air can seem to us so grand, so kinglike, as the Influence of all-conquering, all-actuating Will !

But just as this all-conquering, all-actuating WILL do we contemplate God, when we regard him as the Father ALMIGHTY, the Sovereign Lord and Ruler of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; the one originating Will within the various separate wills of rational beings, “in whose hands are the hearts of all men, and who doth turn and dispose them according to His godly wisdom !” “I am the Lord,—that frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad ; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish.” Isa. lxiv. 24, 25. “Surely as I have thought so shall it come to pass, and as I have purposed so shall it stand.” Isa. xiv. 24. “God is the Judge ; he putteth down one and setteth up another.” Ps. lxxv. 7. “He is in one mind, who can turn Him ? And what his soul desireth even that he doeth !” Job xxiii. 13.

And such a God, then,—uniting in Himself, these two elements of unlimited Power ; Force and Influence—the physical energy of divine Life—and the moral energy of divine Will—such a God, Almighty over matter and mind, do the Scriptures set before us under those majestic titles, “The Lord :” “The Lord of Hosts :” “The mighty God :” “The blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords !” In this character was he worshipped by Melchizedek when he “blessed Abram and said, Blessed be Abram *of the Most High God*, possessor of heaven and earth.” Gen. xiv. 19. In this character did he reveal himself to Abraham himself,

when he “appeared to him and said to him, I am *the Almighty God* : walk before me and be thou perfect.” Gen. xvii. 1. In this character he was enthroned as Sovereign of the Jewish people, the Lawgiver of their lawgiver, the King of their kings. “The Lord is our defence,” says the Psalmist, “and the Holy One of Israel is our King.” Ps. lxxxix. 18. In this character he is celebrated as ruling, not in Israel only but over the whole earth, supreme. “There is none like unto Thee, O Lord ; thou art great, and thy name is great in might ! Who would not fear thee O King of nations, for to Thee doth it appertain ; inasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms there is none like unto Thee !” Jer. x. 7. “The Lord is the true God ; he is the living God ; *and an everlasting King* ; at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to bear his indignation.” Jer. x. 10. And in this character he is exalted equally above all Supernatural beings, be they the demons of the Gentiles, or the angelic thrones, dominions, principalities and powers of heaven. “The Lord of Hosts is great and greatly to be praised ; he is to be feared *above all gods* ; for all the gods of the nations are but idols, but *the Lord made the heavens* ! Honour and majesty are before him ; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord the honour due unto his name ; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness ; fear before him all the earth ; say among the heathen that THE LORD REIGNETH !” Ps. xcvi. 4—10.

And in this character, therefore, is He specially related *to us*—and to be adored *by us*. All conceptions of God, however exalted, which stop at the idea of his Being—and his Nature—and his benevolent Disposition—and go not on to his *all governing, controlling, Sovereign POWER*, stop short of a thoroughly practical bearing on our heart and character. It

is in the nature of man to admire, and even adore, the mysterious, the sublime, the good : but it is not in his nature to *submit himself* but to the SUPREME. Not indeed that to mere *Force*, however mighty, a rational nature can surrender : he may be trampled on and crushed, yet not subdued. It is only from the Influence of Will on will, that true submission—which is voluntary acquiescence—can result. And it is only, therefore, as we recognize, and think of, God, habitually, as *the Almighty Will*, that ordereth all things both in heaven and earth, that we attain to solid, practical religion,—which is *moral obedience*—as distinguished from mere sentimental feeling, or superstitious dread. So essential is this conception of the Sovereignty of God as Lord of all Power, that Sir Isaac Newton defines God, not by any abstract notion of his being, nature, and perfections in himself, but simply by this *relative character* of his *Dominion* over all things. “The word, God,” he says, “is a relative term, and has regard to servants ; for a being however eternal, infinite, and absolutely perfect, without *Dominion* would not be God. We *know* him by his properties and attributes ; by the most wise and excellent structure of all things, and by final causes : but we *adore and worship* him only on account of his *Dominion*. For God, setting aside Dominion, Providence, and final causes, is nothing else but fate and nature.” O that this great truth were deeply felt ! O to remember that the God whose Almightyness you, in your Creed, confess, is YOUR God—YOUR Lord—YOUR Sovereign Ruler. You do not merely spring *from* Him. You do not merely live *by* Him. You must live *to* Him. As, in old time, children were also the servants of their parents, to do their bidding with a filial piety, so we who are the children of God, are by that very relation the servants also of our heavenly Father. He did not give us life and then dismiss us to follow our own devices. The hand that made us retains us in its grasp. The Will

that spoke us into being would have us exercise that being in harmony with itself. A derived will living in secession from the Absolute Will, this is the essence of sin and misery. And only therefore as our will returns into accordance with the Absolute can we find holiness and happiness !

Would then, that this subject of God's Almightyness might afford a *salutary caution* to every reader who may be contemning or neglecting—who is in the slightest degree inclined to condemn or to neglect—the Authority of the law of God, the unchangeable demands of DUTY towards the great Supreme ! With whom are such contending ? Not with a man like yourself :—over whom you might calculate on ultimate triumph. Not with a multitude of men ;—whose power though you might never hope to overcome, you still may at last escape from through the gate of death. Not with the powers of nature ;—which, with all their tremendousness, are nothing as against an immaterial never dying Spirit. But with Him who is GOD and not man—who is SPIRIT and not flesh—the grasp of whose hand can never be relaxed—out of the sphere of whose influence you can never escape—who lives for ever, as your spirit will live—and who will act for ever on that spirit, for endless good, or endless evil ! And are you mad then ? —you who are indifferent to the anger of your Almighty Sovereign ? Have you counted the cost ? Are you prepared for the result ? Will you brave the eternal consequences ? Remember, God has put forth laws and judgments—holy laws and righteous judgments—against sin : and God will never shrink from executing these judgments on your soul, if that sin shall continue unrepented of, not put away ! “ God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent ; hath he said and shall he not do it ? hath he spoken and shall he not make it good ? ” Numb. xxiii. 19. “ Hast thou an arm like God ? and canst thou thunder with a

voice like his?" Job xl. 9. "He is wise in heart, and *mighty in strength* : who hath hardened himself against Him, and hath prospered?" Job ix. 4.

But on the other hand, what a *blessed encouragement* may be derived from this topic of God's Almightyness, to those who are endeavouring to do his will. You are not leaning on an arm of flesh. You are not trusting in created might. "The Lord of Hosts is with you, the God of Jacob is your refuge!" And therefore amidst all your trials, dangers, and infirmities, you may be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." "For there is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heavens in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms!" Deut. xxxiii. 26. O the full security, the all sufficient help, provided for every faithful servant of God!

"Who the Creator love, created might
Dread not : within their tents no terrors walk ;
For they are holy things before the Lord,
Aye unprofaned, though earth should league with hell !"

CHAPTER V.

GOD THE CREATOR OF ALL WORLDS.

EVERY subject of religious meditation endears to us the Word of God—the inspired and authoritative revelation of divine truth. Without the Bible we must be tossed for ever on the boundless ocean of conjecture. With it we have a compass to direct our course into the haven of peace. From other sources we may learn our wants, but Scripture only tells us how these wants may be supplied. By other teachers, questions manifold may be aroused in us, but Scripture only furnishes to such questions an answer that can *satisfy*. From observation and experience we are taught that we are sinful, weak, and dying men; but from the Bible we discover how the sinner may be pardoned, the weak made strong, the being of a day enjoy the blessed hope of everlasting life. Nature and Reason set before us objects full of wisdom, power, and beauty; and teach us something of their marvellous connection and symmetry; and point with no wavering finger to the hidden Source from which they must have sprung; but the Bible unveils to us this hidden Source as the *Maker* of these glorious works, the Author of their form, the Producer of their very substance. Thanks be to God for his enlightening Word!

Such gratitude we cannot but experience in passing on to the consideration of the third clause of the Apostles' Creed, which sets before us a truth, which nothing but *Revelation*

can make certain, and nothing but *Faith* can receive, the CREATION, namely of all worlds. We have meditated already upon God as the Ground of all being—the Original of all intelligence—the Author of all good—the Lord of all power; we have now to look upon him as emphatically, and in a sense which none of those previous views necessarily imply, the CREATOR OF ALL WORLDS: “I believe in God the Father Almighty MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.”

And thanks be to God, again I say, that we have only to consult, on this mysterious topic, the simple declarations of the Word of God. Creation is a work of which the Understanding can form no conception. The very Idea is one which not all our observation, nor all our experience; and consequently not all our reasoning, whose basis and material must be observation and experience; can furnish us with. We see, indeed, that things are produced *one from another*. We are able ourselves to fashion materials supplied to us into innumerable forms. But the production of the *first* material—not from any thing else—this we can form no conception of, because any thing *like* this we have never met with.

And therefore the Apostle Paul when he asserts this truth, declares it as a truth to be received by *Faith*. “Through *faith* we understand” (*i. e.* we judge, become convinced of; not, we comprehend*) “that the worlds were framed by the Word of God.” Heb. xi. 3. Through that faith which he defines as “the evidence of things not seen;”—which, when the Senses and the Understanding have run through the

* Νοούμεν expresses the conviction of the Reason, not the comprehension of the Understanding. See Rom. i. 20, “the invisible things of God are clearly seen,” (recognized; not, seen *into*) “being understood,” (νοούμενα judged of, brought home to our mind) “by the things that are made.” Cf. Justin, quoted by Grotius: αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν ἐπέδειξεν, ἐπέδειξε δὲ διὰ πίστεως, ἥ μόνῃ Θεὸν ἰδεῖν συγχεχωρηται. “God has himself manifested himself; but this *to faith*; by which alone can we attain to know God.”

entire series of things produced and things producing, of consequents and antecedents, effects and causes, and stand baffled in amazement, in blank suspense—then, takes the place of these inferior faculties and with a child-like confidence sits down before the inspired Oracle of God, and listens with a docile admiration to the first sentence of the first chapter of the first book of His revelations—"In the beginning God CREATED the heavens and the earth." Gen. i. 1.

"Through *faith*" then, "we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things that do appear." Let us consider the truths revealed to us in this declaration.

And first we learn from it, *That all things were made BY GOD.* "The worlds," *i. e.* all that we see on earth and in the sky—this globe on which we live, that sun round which it moves, and all those other worlds which spangle the veil of night—these were all "framed by the Word of God." They owe, not only their form and constitution, all the order of their several parts, all the regularity of their movements, all the method and symmetry of their marvellous being, but *that being itself*,* to the will and wisdom and power of God. As no one can look upon the mechanism of a watch, and say it threw itself, or could have fallen by chance, into those arrangements which conduce, by complicated and yet orderly movement to a certain definite end; so no one can observe the system of the universe without recognizing and adoring the "framing," putting together, contrivance, it displays; and crying out spontaneously "This has been intended—been

* For *καταρτίζω* is used in the Septuagint, Ps. lxxiv. 16, as equivalent to *יָבַד*, to make; set up; cause to be; Vulg. "*Tu fabricatus es auroram et solem.*" Compare also its use in Heb. x. 5. "A body hast thou prepared," formed, constructed, "for me."

pre-arranged—been fashioned—been produced !” Hence the very name for the world is derived both in Greek and Latin from its order, symmetry, beauty. Hence the Hebrew words for its production all express a forming, framing, fashioning, moulding, even as a potter moulds clay with plastic hand, into the shape, and for the use, which he has purposed in himself. Words are the signs of conceptions, and all words in every language, that refer to this subject, show that men cannot form to themselves *any other conception* of the origin of the world than this of its formation and production by *another than itself*. Go down even to the lowest grade of humanity, and ask the Hottentot and the Caffre what they have learned from merely opening their eyes on things around them, and taking in the first impression they present, and you will find that their proper names for God, signify “ Worker ” and “ Maker.”

So universal is the faith, which the Bible authenticates, in “ a Maker of Heaven and Earth.” “ The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth *his handy work*. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. *Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.*” Ps. xix. 1—4. “ The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth, by understanding hath he established the heavens.” Prov. iii. 19. “ Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands.” Ps. cii. 25. “ Blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. Thou, even thou, art Lord alone : thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens with all their host ; the earth and all things that are therein, the seas and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all, and the host of heaven worshippeth thee !” Nehem. ix. 5, 6.

But those words of St. Paul contain yet more than this. The second truth we learn from them is, *That all things were thus made by God OUT OF NOTHING.* “The worlds were framed, so that things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear.” It was not by the mere application of wisdom and power to existing materials ; it was not simply by reducing some rude, confused, chaotic mass of original matter into beauty and order ; that God wrought as the Maker of heaven and earth. *That matter itself was produced by him.* The living energy of God *created* that which the divine wisdom subsequently moulded and fashioned into shape and beauty. Not merely was the present *form* of things produced—their very *substance* was called into being by God. True, this is above our comprehension. True, therefore, that no single word, in any language, has precisely expressed this ; for words are formed from things and facts ; and things and facts present to us only the idea of *formation*, never of absolute *creation*. But not the less true is it that thus *it must be.* That “the things which are seen were not made of things which do appear,” is indeed a fact beyond our *conception*, but it is not the less a fact. We cannot understand *how* it should be, but we may be convinced that it *is.* For no other conclusion can consist with the nature of God, or of the world, or of the relation in which God stands to the world. There are but three modes of production by which the world can have come into being. To suppose either of the two former is to make the world part of God, or equal to God. The latter therefore is the only supposition left to us. The first mode is that of *Emanation*, or production from God himself ; and this is true only of Him the only begotten Son, who is “very God of very God ;”—“bright effluence of bright essence, *increate.*” The second is that of *Formation*, or production out of substances already existing independently of God ; which is true of God’s organiza-

tion and continued multiplication of created things, but never can be true of the *first production* of those things. For, in the first place, such a process is not a *first production*, a pre-existent something being implied in the very notion of it; and in the second place, to suppose such pre-existing something out of God, on which God worked, is to assume that God is not the Ground, nor can therefore be the Lord of all things, *i. e.* that he is not God. And therefore there is nothing remaining for us to admit (we must *believe* it though we cannot *understand* it) but the third mode of production, which we emphatically call *Creation*—a production not *from God himself*—nor from *any thing existing out of God*;—and therefore expressible only by the phrase production *out of nothing*: which phrase, indeed, can convey to us no positive conception—is not intended to convey it—but simply excludes and puts away all other positive conceptions, and confines the mind to the simple *Fact*, of the entire *Origination* of the world by God,—*how*, we know not; *how*, we cannot know.* All things that exist are no *emanation from God*—they are not *co-existent* with God,—but, both in substance as in form, they have been *called into being* by God. “Of Him,” says Paul, “and through Him, and to Him are all things.” Rom. xi. 36. “Who hath wrought and done this?” says the Lord by Isaiah, “I who have *called the generations of men from the beginning*”—*i. e.* by whose will and *fiat* all the nations of the earth have sprung up into being—“I the LORD, the First and with the last, I am HE;” Isa.

* Ex nihilo, id est, *non ex aliquo*. Gerhard. Non designat materiam sed *excludit*. Quenstedt. The idea of creation out of nothing excludes every conceivable cause, whether passive or active, that can be supposed concurrent with the Originative energy of God. All things exist simply and solely *by the Divine Will*. “Quod autem res ex nihilo conditæ sunt docet hæc sententia: ‘Ipse dixit et facta sunt, ipse mandavit et creata sunt,’ *i. e.* *dicente seu jubente Deo res exortæ sunt*. Non igitur ex materia priore exstructæ sunt, sed *Deo dicente, cum res non essent, esse cœperunt*.”—MELANCTHON.

xli. 4. "I am He: I am the first, I also am the last. Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: *when I call unto them they stand up together!*" Isa. xlviii. 12, 13.*

And this thought leads to the third truth which this passage of St. Paul declares to us;—namely, that *all things were made out of nothing* BY THE SIMPLE ENERGY OF THE DIVINE WILL. "Through faith we understand that the world was made *by the word of God.*" To do things "with a word" is a strong proof of Divine power. "Lord trouble not thyself," said the Centurion to our blessed Lord, "but *speak the word only*, and my servant shall be healed." Matt. viii. 8. "I will," said Jesus to the leper, "*be thou clean*;" and immediately his leprosy was cleansed." Matt. viii. 3. But to *make* things by a word is a yet higher work, the work of absolute creative energy. To think and to act are, with God, the same. To declare his will is to execute, in and by that declaration, that will. And this it is which the Apostle commemorates as the divine method of creation. The idea excludes all labour—all preparation—all means—all processes in time and space. And it represents, therefore, not the gradual *formation* of this visible world, as this is detailed from the second verse onward of the first chapter of Genesis; but the previous *creation* of the material itself, which God gradually reduced into its present form. "*In the beginning,*" before any thing existed, "God created the heavens and the earth." Gen. i. 1. "By

* This term, therefore, "to call into being," is perhaps the simplest to express that inscrutable act or energy whereby the Almighty *made to be* things that previously were not. In which sense Philo also says, τὰ μὴ ὄντα ἐκάλεισεν εἰς τὸ εἶναι. The phrase, "*Creation out of nothing*," is derived from 2 Macc. vii. 28: "I beseech thee, my son, look upon the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, and consider that God made them of things that were not," ἱεὺς οὐκ ὄντων, which the Vulgate has translated *ex nihilo*.

the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them *by the breath of his mouth*. He spake and it was done ; he commanded and it stood fast." Ps. xxxiii. 6, 9. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power ; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure " (according to thy pleasure,* the mere expression of thy will) —"they exist and they are created !" Rev. iv. 11.

And hence it is that we are told, in other parts of Scripture, that God made all things by his only begotten *Son*. For the Son of God is his essential, living, and life-giving *Word*—the expression and putting forth of the Divine Will—the executive of the Supreme. "In the beginning," says St. John, "was *The Word*, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. By Him" *i. e.* through Him, by his ministration, as the Godhead put forth in act, "were all things made, and without him was not any thing made that was made." John i. 1, 3. And as St. Paul confesses that "to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things and we in him" so equally does he declare that "there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, *by* whom are all things, and we *by* him." 1 Cor. viii. 6. "For, *by* him" he writes to the Hebrews, "God made the worlds." Heb. i. 2. "By him," he tells the Colossians, "were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers ; all things were created by Him and for Him ; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." Col. i. 16, 17. The unseen Father dwells in the mysterious depths of the Godhead, "dark with excessive bright." The Son is the Manifestor of his mind and will ; and as the Manifestor of the divine *Will*, he is, at the same time and by the same act, the Creator of the divine *works* :

* διὰ τὸ θελημά σου. Cf. Daniel viii. 4 : xi. 3. 16. "He that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him."

for with God expression is execution, and to speak is to call into being that which he speaks. These, indeed, are high and awful themes, but they are Scriptural, and therefore profitable. It is well to gaze sometimes on those dark clouds of mystery which envelope the Supreme; till some bright flashes of unearthly truth break forth upon our startled sight, and dazzle us into the conviction that we are truly "but of yesterday and know nothing;"—that "God is great and we know him not;"—that "touching the Almighty we cannot find him out!"

Such then are the truths concerning God as "the Maker of heaven and earth," which it becomes us well to ponder and adore. They are not speculative, but practical; they are not the dreams of philosophy, but the revelations of the wisdom of God.

And let us then learn from them, first, *the insignificance of created things*. We look around us on the majesty and beauty of nature—we contemplate the deep-rooted mountains, the ever rolling sea, the stedfast heavens with their worlds of light—and we can understand, if not excuse, the reverence with which untutored ignorance fell down and worshipped all this grandeur, stopping at the things it saw. But when we know that all this goodly earth, and all that shining host of heaven are but the *creatures* of Superior Might—that they are *made*—that they have been called forth into being within a limited time—and that, moreover, as that being depends, from first to last, upon the simple Will of their Creator, they may as easily, when he shall please, dissolve into their original nothingness, and, like the baseless fabric of a vision, leave not a rack behind—then may we learn to count all visible and material existences as of very little worth. What is this world in which we live, but as a younger daughter of the Creative

Energy ; one link in the long-drawn series of God's self-manifestations ; one little island in the boundless ocean of being ; one single particle of the ever-flowing current of life ; and the All before it, and the All around it, and the All that shall follow it, who can picture to his liveliest fancy ? If astronomers inform us that changes are continually going on amidst the stars of heaven, new ones emerging into being, and old ones disappearing from the face of creation ; if we know from every source that can be depended on that this our earth is similarly but the creation of yesterday ; what then are we, its inhabitants—what is all that it contains—what the great globe itself—what the universe, of which it is so small a part—compared with God ? with Him who made them—who holds them in his hand, and who can in a moment drop them from his grasp ? with Him who has “measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance ! Behold, the nations, before Him, are as a drop of the bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance ; behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing !”

Learn then, secondly, from this subject, *the surpassing worth of the Creator's favour*. “We are the clay, and He is the potter, and we are all the work of his hand.” It is in God that we live, and move, and have our being ; with God that we have to do ; and by God that our eternal place and form of being will be assigned to us, when all that now excites our admiration shall have been dissolved — when “the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up.” And O, therefore, to stand well with God ! Reader, let me ask you, Do you stand well with God ? You are a sinner—have you sought his mercy ?

You are corrupt—have you obtained his grace? You are mortal—have you become partaker of his life? That mercy is to be found only through the atoning merits of the Son of God, and not by your own works and deservings. That grace is to be enjoyed only through the indwelling of the Spirit of this Son in your hearts. That Life is to be realized only by your vital union by this Spirit with this Son. And have you then fled to this Son of God? Are you living in this Son of God? If not, where is your stay? And where shall be your refuge in that awful day when you shall see “the great white throne and Him that sitteth on it, from whose face *the earth and the heaven shall flee away*; and there shall be found no place for them?”

But are you indeed standing well with your Creator, because you have been “created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works?” Then learn, lastly, from this subject, *the blessedness of that new creation*, of which all present things are but the harbingers. There shall be another creation—“a new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” And all the power of God, as the Originator of this present world, is the promise and the pledge of that greater power which he will put forth in the regeneration, when he shall make all things new. Your hope is fixed on One who was before this world, and shall be after it—who called it into being at his word, and with a word can change it into a far more glorious being! And, “blessed therefore” (let me say in Hooker’s noble words) “blessed for ever and ever be that mother’s child *whose faith hath made him the child of God*! The earth may shake, the pillars of the world may tremble under us, the countenance of the heaven may be appalled, the sun may lose his light, the moon her beauty, the stars their glory, but concerning the man that trusteth in God, what is there in the world that shall change his heart or overthrow his faith?—

alter his affection towards God, or the affection of God to him?" "Lift up your eyes to the heavens" (we must close with far diviner words than those) "and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but *my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished!*" Isa. li. 6.

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

PART II.

GOD THE SON.

Est autem Christus certitudo et pignus gratiæ Dei. — ZWINGLIUS.

Nous pouvons connoître Dieu sans connoître nos misères ; ou nos misères, sans connoître Dieu ; ou même Dieu et nos misères, sans connoître le moyen de nous délivrer des misères qui nous accablent. Mais nous ne pouvons connoître JESUS-CHRIST sans connoître tout ensemble, et Dieu, et nos misères, et le remède de nos misères ; parceque JESUS-CHRIST n'est pas simplement Dieu, mais que c'est un *Dieu réparateur de nos misères*. — PASCAL.

La Divinité des Chrétiens ne consiste pas en un Dieu simplement auteur des vérités géométriques et de l'ordre des éléments ; c'est la part des Païens. Elle ne consiste pas simplement en un Dieu qui exerce sa Providence sur la vie et sur les biens des hommes, pour donner une heureuse suite d'années à ceux qui l'adorent ; c'est le partage des Juifs. Mais le Dieu des Chrétiens est un Dieu d'amour et de consolation ; c'est un Dieu qui remplit l'ame et le cœur qu'il possède : c'est un Dieu qui leur fait sentir intérieurement leur misère et sa miséricorde infinie ; qui s'unit au fond de leur ame ; qui la remplit d'humilité, de joie, de confiance, d'amour ; qui les rend incapables d'autre fin que de lui-même.—PASCAL.

PART II.

GOD THE SON.

CHAPTER I.

THE OFFICE OF CHRIST.

THE necessities of man are threefold—arising from his threefold condition as a limited being, a guilty being, and an infirm being. And therefore the revelations of God, which address themselves to those necessities and that condition, are similarly threefold—of a Father on whom the limited may lean with reverent dependence—of a Saviour by whom the guilty may be liberated from his condemnation—and of a Sanctifier who can strengthen the infirm and quicken him to spiritual life.

Hence the threefold division of our Creed; which is no arbitrary arrangement, but results from that inherent distinction which runs throughout the Scriptures, and according to which all just views of Theology involuntarily arrange themselves. The doctrine of the Trinity is essentially connected with the nature of man, and the manifestations of God; it is no branch and offset, but the very root and trunk of Christianity.

To the second particular, then, of this great doctrine we pass, in entering on that Second Division of our Creed, in which we “learn to believe in GOD THE SON, WHO HATH REDEEMED US AND ALL MANKIND.” In which Division our attention must be turned, successively, to the Titles—the Birth—the

Death—the Resurrection—the Exaltation—and the Coming again—of our Divine Master, Jesus Christ.

His TITLES are expressed in those words of the Creed, “I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord.” In which you will observe that our blessed Redeemer is distinguished by names which indicate his *Office*, as the Saviour—his *Dignity*, as the Christ—his *Nature*, as the Son of God—and his *Authority*, as our Lord.

The First Title, then, which we have to consider, is that of “JESUS;” which indicates his OFFICE as *the Saviour* of the world.

For you are aware how common is the practice, in Holy Writ, of designating persons by names which serve as memorials of some circumstance connected with their birth, or character, or office. Eve, for example, was so called by God, because she was “the mother of all *living*.” Lamech called the name of his son, Noah (*i. e.* rest or comfort) “because he said, This same shall *comfort* us concerning our work and toil of our hands.” Abram, when God promised to make him the Founder of the vast family of His faithful worshippers was from that time entitled by Him “Abraham,” *i. e.* “a Father of a great multitude,” for says the Lord, “*a Father of many nations* have I constituted thee.” And so, similarly, when HE was born who was to be the Deliverer from all sin and misery, to Him was appointed as his proper name a title which intimates the nature of the work and office which was entrusted to Him: “Thou shalt call his name JESUS” (*i. e.* Saviour) said the angel of the Lord to Joseph, “for he shall *save* his people from their sins.” Matt. i. 21.

Salvation, then,—*Deliverance*—is the glorious Office assigned to our blessed Lord. Other persons, indeed, had been called Saviours, who were sent by God on particular

emergencies to work out particular deliverances for his people. Thus, when the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, in the times of the Judges, and “he sold them into the hand of Cushan-rishathaim, King of Mesopotamia,” then, (we read, Judges iii. 9) “When the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer” (a Saviour) “to the children of Israel, who delivered” (saved) “them; even Othniel the son of Kenaz.” And such gracious interpositions are commemorated in the book of Nehemiah as manifestations of God’s untiring compassion: “When they were disobedient and rebelled against thee, thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies, who vexed them; but, in the time of their trouble, when they cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven; and according to thy manifold mercies thou gavest them *Saviours*, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies.” Nehem. ix. 26, 27. And what these temporary and local saviours were to some portions of mankind, that is Jesus to an enslaved and guilty *world*. “God” says our Lord, “so loved *the world*, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.” John iii. 16.

But this title, “Jesus,” indicates not only the great work of Salvation, or Deliverance, of the human race from the evil they have brought upon themselves by their rebellion against God; but it declares, moreover, that this deliverance is emphatically a *divine* work, undertaken in God’s name—furthered by God’s help—made successful by God’s power. For, “Jesus” means more than Deliverance; it means “*The Lord’s* deliverance.” The form “Jesus” of the New Testament is equivalent to “Joshua,” in the Old Testament. And the title “Joshua,” you will remember, was given by God to the Successor of Moses, with special reference to his becoming *The Liberator whom God himself appointed*;

to complete the redemption of the people of Israel, and to bring them into the full enjoyment of the inheritance promised to them. Joshua's original name was Hoshea, which means simply "Deliverance;" but when God selected him, first to go up and examine the promised land, and then to lead the Israelites into it, "He called Oshea, Jehoshua" (Numb. xiii. 16) *i. e.* Joshua; prefixing to his original appellation the first syllable of the Divine Name, "Jehovah," to indicate that He had appointed him as His Deliverer—the Deliverer constituted and commissioned by His authority and sent forth *in His name*, to accomplish His work, and thus marking out his office to the people as clearly, as if he had said to them, in so many words, "This is the person by whom I, Jehovah, will certainly accomplish that great Deliverance, which after such delay still lingers—to which such obstacles are still opposed by the giants in the land—to which you feel that human power is utterly unequal—but which by my divine Might shall be conquered for you."

In the name "Jesus," then, we are assured, not only of deliverance from guilt and misery, but of the *certainty* of that Deliverance; its full accomplishment, notwithstanding every obstacle, through the exercise of *divine* interposition. And consequently it includes in its meaning all that is expressed by those other titles of vast significance by which the promised Saviour is designated by the prophets of God.

It is explained, for example, by St. Matthew as being equivalent to "Immanuel,"—God with us; God on our side—God our helper and defender; "the Lord of Hosts with us, the God of Jacob our refuge." Matt. i. 23. For you will recollect how that title "Immanuel" was first vouchsafed, through the Prophet Isaiah, in the time of Ahab, as the pledge of God's continued help, notwithstanding the despondency of the rulers, and of the majority of the people. It was the

watchword of the faithful, to animate them with hope, and to assure them that their God would never leave their side. Was “the heart of the people moved, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind?” God’s servants were to be quiet and fear not, for, “Behold, the Lord shall give you a sign; a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name *Immanuel!*” Isa. vii. 14. Would the armies of Assyria pass through Judah, and as an overflowing stream reach even to the neck, and fill the breadth of the land? Still, cheer up! at that single word, “*Immanuel!*” Isa. viii. 8. Would the nations associate themselves together? They should be broken in pieces! Would they take counsel together? Their counsel should come to nought! For, again remember, “*Immanuel!*” i. e. *God is with us!* Isa. viii. 9, 10. Even as the Psalmist assures himself with the thought, “*The Lord is on my side, I will not fear what man can do unto me. The Lord taketh my part with them that help me!*” Ps. cxviii. 6, 7. Even as God cheers the faithful by Ezekiel, saying “I will raise up for them a *Plant of renown*, and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither shall they bear the shame of the heathen any more; and then shall they know that *I, the Lord their God am with them*, and that they are my people, saith the Lord God!” Ezek. xxxiv. 29, 30.

Nor less equivalent, therefore, is this name “Jesus,” to that other title of the Great Deliverer, proclaimed by Jeremiah, when he said, (Jer. xxiii. 5, 6,) “Behold the days shall come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth: in his days Judah shall be *saved*, and Israel shall dwell *safely*; and this is his Name whereby he shall be called, *The Lord our Righteousness*,” i. e. Jehovah our Vindicator—the maintainer of our cause—our

never failing Helper! Even as David cries to the Lord for safety from all his enemies,—“Hear me when I call *O God of my righteousness!*” Ps. iv. 1. Even as, elsewhere, he expresses his reliance on God’s protection,—“By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, *O God of our salvation*, who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth!” Ps. lxxv. 5.

Thus then you see the Idea expressed by this Title, “Jesus,” open out till it comprehends within its ample sphere all that you need, for help, deliverance, protection, blessedness; all that the ancients sought to indicate by the untranslatable title which they gave their benefactors, princes, tutelary gods;* all that is ascribed, by an accumulation of terms, to Jehovah himself, when David declares, “The Lord is my rock; and my fortress; and my deliverer; in him will I trust; he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, and *my Saviour.*” 2 Sam. xxii. 2, 3. The office of our blessed Lord thus indicated is that of *Deliverance from evil* in every possible form in which it presses on the world at large, and on the individual soul. It is a Deliverance assured to us by the *presence and power of God himself*, as The Deliverer. It is a Deliverance which includes all the *care and guardianship needful for our maintenance* in liberty and peace, and our enjoyment of its fullest blessings. Your Lord can rescue you from *the bondage of evil*, for he is Jesus, —*the Saviour*: he can bring you into the promised land of

* “Hoc quantum est! ita magnum, ut Latino uno verbo exprimi non possit. Is est nimirum *soter*, qui salutem dedit.” Cicero, Verr. 2. 63. “But why untranslatable?” asks Ernesti. “Why not by ‘servator?’ Because ‘servator’ will express σωτήρ so far as it intimates a deliverer from evil and danger; but not in the sense in which σωτήρ is equivalent to ἐνεργήτης, one who *enriches and adorns us with benefits.*” And truly, Jesus is not merely our Deliverer, but one who enriches and adorns his people with every blessing! who exercises all care and guardianship over those delivered, and loads them with the benefits which he has purchased for them with his blood!

holiness, for he is Jesus—the *Divine Saviour*: he can secure to you all the blessings of that land, for he is Jesus—the *ever-living Saviour*.

Do you then feel your need of *Deliverance from evil*? Are you groaning under an oppression worse than that of the Israelites in Egypt, when they “sighed by reason of their bondage, and they cried, and their cry came unto God by reason of their bondage?” Do you find yourself in the hands of enemies who “vex” you, more than all the people of Canaan could vex the children of Israel, when “in the time of their trouble they cried out unto the Lord?” O remember that He who listened to his people in all their successive dangers, notwithstanding their folly and guilt, and “heard their groaning because he remembered his covenant with their fathers, and gave them Saviours who saved them out of the hand of their enemies”—He has given for you “a Saviour which is Christ the Lord!” I ask not what is the condition of your bondage—I ask not what are your temptations, difficulties, nay more, the remaining power of your sinful impulses and habits—I ask only, Have you begun to struggle with your spiritual enemies? Do you long to break off the yoke which galls you, and to rise against the tyrant who has led you captive at his will? And I say that for such, just such in all their destitution, there is proclaimed, in *Jesus* a Deliverer mighty to save! Where, indeed, there is no struggle we know not how to speak of help; when men hug their chains, we talk in vain of Deliverance; the whole Gospel of Christ *presupposes* a consciousness of sin and danger—*presupposes* a desire to escape therefrom—*presupposes* an effort to catch at every means by which the soul may be rescued from its spiritual thralldom. But where there is such a struggle, there God himself is “having respect to it;” then Christ himself invites you, “Come unto me, thou that art weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest!”

Surely there are multitudes who are not really *in love with sin*, even though they are too often brought under the power of sin—who hate themselves for their folly, who groan under their weakness, who would give the world to be rescued from their abject slavery and translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Surely there are many who, if they could but believe their case was not entirely desperate, would find new life poured into their heart, animating their powers, and quickening them to one determined, because hopeful, spring from sin to holiness, from the devil to God! And yet how difficult it is to get men to believe this! How faint, how dead, in the guilty conscience, is trust in God! How long it was before Moses could persuade the Israelites that the Lord would really deliver them by his hand; how fluctuating were their expectations even when they had given ear to his assurances! And therefore, the first grand object of the manifestation of Jesus as *the Saviour*, is to inspire *Hope*; to lift up a standard round which the worsted combatants with the world, the flesh, and the devil, may rally and renew the fight—to stretch forth a hand which the drowning sinner, in his agony, may catch at—to change the moan of desperation, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!” into the cry of hope, “I thank God, through Jesus Christ my Lord!” Do you complain that you are guilty and deserving of God's indignation? True. But Jesus shed his blood upon the cross to blot out your guilt! Do you cry, There is no health in me? True. But Jesus is the good physician who can heal your sicknesses! Have you found by frequent trial that all the purposes and efforts of mere remorse have no force to deliver you from the power of “the strong man armed” who has possession of your soul? True. But Jesus is “a Stronger than he,” who can bind him and cast him out! O for faith! O for hope! O for that some-

thing far more and other, than shame, and self-reproach, and reformation—that transformation of the inner man by *the renewing of the mind*, which Faith and Hope can work! And then, “in that day you shall say, O Lord I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me thine anger is turned away and thou comfortest me. Behold, *God is my Salvation!* I will trust and not be afraid, for *the Lord Jehovah* is my strength and my song; he also is become *my Salvation!*” Isa. xii. 1, 2.

But, perhaps, you *have* thus turned to God by Christ, and thus have found him to be indeed your “Jesus,” as the Deliverer from guilt. Yet still, you need continual help. You have escaped the doom of Egypt; you have sprinkled the blood of the atoning lamb upon your conscience; the destroying angel has passed over you; and you have girded up your loins, and taken the pilgrim’s staff, and are hastening through the wilderness in eager flight from your detested bondage. But then, your pilgrimage is one of trial—disappointment—attack from enemies—weariness in yourself—delay and seeming denial of the promised inheritance. But fear not, Christian, you have a *Saviour* with you still. He who brought you out, now goes before you. He who consecrated you to God, intercedes for you with God. He is your *Protector* as well as your Deliverer. His office is to guide you in your course through “all that way” that you must pass along from the city of destruction to the city of God. As God, by Moses, led his people through the wilderness, so does He, by Jesus, lead you “by a right way to a city of habitation.” “He brought them out,” we read, “by the Shepherd of his flock; “He put his holy Spirit within him; he led them by the right hand of Moses, with his glorious arm, dividing the water before him, to make himself an everlasting name.” Isa. lxiii. 11, 12. “He found them in a desert land and the vast howling wilderness;

he led them about, he instructed them; he kept them as the apple of his eye; as an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead them, and there was no strange God with them!" Deut. xxxii. 10—12. O what an animating image is this, to set forth to us the unfailing care of God our *Saviour*! What effectual guardianship does it proclaim for all who, having come out, by the right hand of Jesus, from the bondage of the Evil One, are marching under his banner, towards the rest and the inheritance which he has purchased for them by his blood!

And to this rest, and this inheritance he will ultimately bring them in. This is the third thing pledged to us by the very title of "*Jesus*." Not only that He *begins* salvation, for us, by the blotting out our guilt—and *carries on* salvation, in us, by the guiding our steps into the path of peace—but that he will *complete* this salvation, to us, by the final subjugation of every enemy, and the pouring out on us all the riches of the promised land. He who *died* to justify us, and *lives* to sanctify us, will *come again in glory* to bless us! He is the true *Joshua*, the Captain of the Lord, who shall lead his people over Jordan, and bring them to his everlasting kingdom. "The *Redeemer* shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord." Isa. lix. 20. "And they shall call thee, the City of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel; and I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations, and thou shalt know that *I, the Lord, am thy Saviour*, and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob." Isa. lx. 14—16. You have the *pledge* of all this, in the work which Christ has already done for you—you have the *anticipation* of it in the work that he is doing in you. For

“ if, when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be SAVED by his life.” Rom. v. 10. “ For as Christ was once offered to bear the sin of many, so, to them that look for him, he shall appear the second time, without sin, unto SALVATION !” Heb. ix. 28.

CHAPTER II.

THE DIGNITY OF CHRIST.

SALVATION is a word of no small compass. It comprises the deliverance of the sinner, as from all without him, so equally from all within him, that is contrary to God. It includes his Sanctification as well as his Redemption. The same sacrifice and sprinkling of blood which *saved* the Israelites from the destroying angel, also *consecrated* them as the people of God. The same arm which brought them out from the tyranny of Pharaoh put them under the rule of Moses. And the same Covenant which pledged to them God's protection imposed upon them God's law.

Hence, therefore, He who was sent to be the Liberator, not of one people only, but of the race of man, was sent to be therewith their *Ruler* also. He whose proper name is "Jesus," to indicate his Office as the Saviour of the lost, has equally the title of "Christ," to remind us of his DIGNITY as the Sovereign of the saved. We "believe in Jesus CHRIST."

To understand which title it is important to consider first, *The leading idea contained in the Scripture notion of the Messiah, or Christ.* We must remember that the great object of God in separating the Jewish nation to be his peculiar people was to establish among them, in specimen as it were, the manifested supremacy of the divine Authority and Law—the Theocracy, or government by God, and not by man; or by man, no otherwise than as the representative and minister of God. The Lord himself was enthroned between the cherubim in the

presence-chamber of his sanctuary. His Will, graven on the Tables of the testimony occupied the judgment-seat, and formed the source of all authority, the court of final appeal, for his ministers, the priests. "The Lord was their defence, and the holy One of Israel was their King." Ps. lxxxix. 18. And even when the Israelites, entirely misapprehending the very point of distinction between themselves and other nations, and losing out of sight the special object for which God had chosen them to himself, demanded and obtained a king like to the people round them; even then, this king was invested with no proper authority of his own, but only as the Minister, Lieutenant, Viceroy, of the LORD:—anointed to his office by God's holy oil—sustained in it by God's arm—instructed for its fulfilment, by God's law. It was *the divine LAW* that was still to reign, by the administration of the human executive; and for this reason it was expressly enjoined by God that each successive king, "when he sat upon the throne of his kingdom should write him a copy of this Law, in a book, out of that which was before the Priests and Levites, and it should be with him, and he should read therein all the days of his life, that he might learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of His Law, and His statutes to do them; that his heart might not be lifted up above his brethren, and that he might not turn aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left." Deut. xvii. 18, 19. So that under every form of Regimen the word of the prophet was still true, "*The LORD is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King!*" Isa. xxxiii. 22.

But this special constitution, established on a small scale over the people of Israel, was but the pattern and the symbol of that general government under which alone all nations can attain true prosperity, and to which therefore it is God's design to reduce, in the millennial kingdom, the whole world.

Only as God's Will reigns supreme; only as all offices, national and domestic, public and private, are held and administered under the living presence and influence of the divine Law; so that God, though visible no where, be effective every where—every heart his throne, and every nation the dwelling-place of his glory;*—only then, can “mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other; and the Lord give that which is good, and the earth yield her increase.” This is that blessed consummation, of which the whole Mosaic constitution was but the type—the principle of which, it illustrated, and the promise of which, it proclaimed.

And therefore, amidst the many imperfections of this faint “shadow of good things to come;” this temporary model of the eternal kingdom of God; the prophets looked out earnestly towards *the pure Idea* of which it was the feeble representation, and proclaimed in faith and hope, the ultimate extension and perfection of the divine plan;—its extension, to embrace all peoples—its perfection, by the setting on the throne of universal dominion, no merely human sovereign, no race of kings, but One who should be the brightness of Jehovah's glory and the express image of his person, *the manifested Will and Law* of the Most High; who should destroy every enemy of God and man, and gather together in himself the wills and hearts of all men, to consecrate them as the habitation of God, to constitute them a kingdom of priests, a chosen generation, an holy nation, a peculiar people, an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.

* This idea is very remarkably expressed by Isaiah when he prophesies that “in that day,” the favoured Israel shall be reckoned only as one with her now bitterest enemies, Egypt and Assyria, and the same blessing shall be equally pronounced on all these nations. “In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land; whom the Lord of hosts shall bless saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance.” Isa. xix, 24, 25.

This then is the Scriptural Idea of the Messiah or Christ. He is set forth as GOD'S KING; set up by His authority, and subjugating all things to His law. For "The Messiah," in Hebrew, and "The Christ," in Greek, signifies "The Anointed One," "The King." When the Lord first gave a king to Israel, he commanded Samuel, saying, "To-morrow, about this time, I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt *anoint* (*messhach*) him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may *save my people* out of the hand of the Philistines." 1 Sam. ix. 16. And when he chose David for his representative upon the throne of Israel, he said, "Arise, *anoint* (*messhach*) him, for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil and *anointed* him in the midst of his brethren." 1 Sam. xvi. 12, 13. And therefore when the Prophets speak of Him who was to be emphatically THE KING, of whom those monarchs were but the type, they call him by this title of "THE ANOINTED ONE," "THE CHRIST." "The kings of the earth," says the Psalmist, "set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His ANOINTED (*Messhiach*);—yet have I set MY KING upon my holy hill of Zion." Ps. ii. 2. "Know therefore," says the Angel to Daniel, "that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto THE MESSIAH (the anointed One, *Messhiach*) THE PRINCE, shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks." Dan. ix. 25.

And now then we are prepared to understand, in the second place, *why this title of "Messiah," or "Christ," is assigned to Jesus, our Redeemer.*

For he is the Reality of the Idea which this title indicates. As the Saviour he is *therefore* the Christ. As the Antagonist and Conqueror of the great Adversary of God, he is the Vindicator of the Authority of God. As the Redeemer, he ac-

compleishes the whole extent of that magnificent work which is entrusted to the Christ, the Restoration of the world to God. Such an one he was foretold to be, long before his birth; such an one he showed himself to be, throughout his life; such an one he was declared to be by his exaltation; such an one he has proved himself to be, by his providential visitations from his throne in heaven; and such an one he will fully manifest himself to be, when he shall come again to judge the quick and the dead.

Jesus *was foretold to be the Christ*, long before his birth. That is, the same person who in many passages of the Prophets, and by many distinct marks, is announced to appear when Jesus appeared, to be born as Jesus was born, to do the works which Jesus did, and to experience the treatment which Jesus experienced,—this same person is also announced, by those same prophets, under the name and character of the “Messiah,” or “Christ.” And the particulars predicted of the one person, the human sufferer, with his humiliation and death, are so inseparably interwoven with the particulars predicted of the other person, the divine Conqueror, that no possible method of escaping the conclusion that he who was Jesus, the Saviour, must be also Christ, the King, has been discovered, even by the most inveterate adversaries of this truth, the Jews themselves; but the assumption to which their commentators have recourse, of two Messiahs, of different character, and fates, to appear at different times upon the earth.* For observe, that he who is foretold by Isaiah in one section of his prophecies, to be born of a virgin, and be called

* “Our rabbin say that another king, not of the seed of David, shall appear before the Messiah, the son of David, and him they call Messiah the son of Joseph.” Men. Ham. 81. “Messiah the son of Joseph shall manifest himself first in Galilee!” Jalkut. 142. “Messiah the son of Joseph shall be killed with the sword of Gog.” Ibid. 141.

“Immanuel,” which (as we saw in the preceding chapter) is fulfilled in *Jesus*,—this same being is foretold by the same prophet, in the same section, as “the *Prince of Peace*, of the increase of whose government upon the throne of David there shall be no end.” Isa. ix. 6, 7. He, again, who is spoken of by Micah as coming forth from Bethlehem Ephratah, (the very place where Jesus was born) is declared, in the same sentence, to be that “*Ruler of Israel* whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting.” Mic. v. 2. While, conversely, of him who is announced to Daniel by the angel as “Messiah the Prince,” it is declared immediately after, “Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself” (Dan. ix. 26);—even as Jesus was cut off, but not for his own sin but the sin of the world. And so we might go on, multiplying instances of such coincidence, till we come down to the announcement of the angels at the conception, and at the birth, of Jesus. The same angel who appeared to Joseph and declared to him, “Mary thy wife shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall *save his people* from their sins;” Matt. i. 20, 21; had previously declared to Mary herself, at the Annunciation, “Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus, and *he shall be great*, and shall be called *the Son of the Highest*,” (a special title of *the Christ*, derived from the second Psalm) “and the Lord God shall give unto him *the throne* of his father David, and *of his kingdom* there shall be no end.” Luke i. 31, 32. And just in the same way does the angel, in his proclamation to the Shepherds, join together as meeting in the new-born babe of Bethlehem, those two particulars, of his Office as the Saviour, and his Dignity as the Christ. “Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a *Saviour*, which is CHRIST the Lord!” Luke ii. 10, 11.

But not less, secondly, did Jesus *show himself to be the Christ*, throughout his life. For recollect only, what is the leading Idea of the Christ as he is represented in the Old Testament; what the prominent feature of his character and work, to which all others are subordinated, and in the light of which they must be viewed. It is that of *the Manifester, and the Vindicator of the divine Will*—who was to enter into conflict with every opponent of that will, and be the visible champion of the invisible God. And what was the whole life of Jesus, but the exhibition of this—from first to last, just this? He came into the world as the only-begotten of the Father, the Declarer of his grace and truth; (John i. 18) so reflective of his Will that to know him was to know the Father also, and he that saw him saw the Father. And for the maintenance of this Will, of which he was the visible image, he did battle daily, (not indeed with carnal weapons, but with those which are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds,) against the Devil and his temptations—against the Pharisees and Scribes, with Herod, and with Pontius Pilate, the Agents of that wicked One—and against the dulness and the earthliness of his own disciples. And each victory that he gained, while yet on earth, over the malice of God's Adversary, became a proof of his Dignity as the Christ. He appeals to this himself. As, for example, in the twelfth chapter of St. Matthew. He had cast out demons. The Pharisees insinuated, This is done by Satan's help. His answer is, Will Satan cast out Satan? And his conclusion therefore: If by a power contrary to that of Satan I have thus crippled Satan—"if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God," that divine power which is given to me as the Christ,—then verily "*the kingdom of God is come unto you*:" the triumph of the divine Will over all opposing wills, which it is the Messiah's office to effect, is *already being anticipated by me*, (this is the force of the original term)

has come upon you sooner than you thought for, (ἐφθασεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς) is present in my person, manifests itself by my acts. Matt. xii. 24—28. Just as he tells his enemies in another passage, (Luke xvii. 20) when they demanded of him when the kingdom of God should come, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation"—it is not that display of worldly might and pomp which you are longing for, like the triumphal entry of an earthly monarch, with reference to which men may exclaim, He is come ! There he is !—"but the kingdom of God is already *among you* :"[†] in my person God's supremacy is already manifesting itself ; in my person you have already before you that great King ; in the unpretending, patient individual whom you are despising and rejecting, THE CHRIST is already come !

And hence you find the lowly Jesus, not only claiming for himself this awful Dignity of the Vindicator of God's supremacy, the Minister of judgment and discomfiture on his great adversary, but also devoutly rejoicing, and praising God, on each successive exercise of that judgment which by his ministration, while yet on earth, took place. When the seventy disciples, on whom he had conferred the power of casting out demons and thus breaking the power of Satan, "returned to him with joy, saying Lord, even the devils are subject to us through thy name ; he said unto them, I beheld Satan fall like lightning from heaven !" Luke x. 18. And when it pleased the Father

* Μετὰ παρατηρήσεως, with earthly pomp. Μετὰ περιφανείας ἀνθρωπίνης, with such conspicuousness as men look for and delight in. Euthymius. "Is not ushered in with parade." Campbell.

† Ἐντὸς ὑμῶν. Cf. Xen. Anab. i. 10. 3. ἐντὸς αὐτῶν, i. e. in their camp. Not, "within you," for Jesus is addressing the Pharisees, and in no sense could the kingdom of God be said to be in their hearts. So Beza explains it, "apud vos" Le Clerc, and Beausobre, "au milieu de vous." Whitby, "is even now among you ;—is come unto you !" So ἐν ὑμῖν, Matt. xx. 26. "It shall not be so among you."

to calm his troubled spirit, anxious for the honour of God's name, by assuring him "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again," then he exclaimed with holy exultation, "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out!" John xii. 31. The whole work of Jesus upon earth, as it was a glorifying of God's name—a proclamation of his law—a vindication of his character—a bringing back his lost children—a beating down the power of his adversary; was by these very acts a manifestation of his Dignity as THE CHRIST.

And such, moreover, was Jesus *declared to be by his resurrection from the dead*. Then it was that the dignity of Jesus as the Christ shone out, not merely, as it had done before, to those who could appreciate it, in its *moral splendour*, but even to the grosser-minded multitude, who have no conception of Dignity and Sovereignty but that of overpowering Force. In the sensible miracles which made terrible his death and coming to life again, and in the manifest largesses of miraculous energy which, like a triumphant conqueror, he showered down upon his followers when he had ascended into heaven, there was proof for all men that this Jesus was indeed the Christ. "Truly," cried the Centurion who was watching Jesus, when he saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, "Truly this was the Son of God!" Matt. xxvii. 54. "This *Jesus*," cried St. Peter boldly to the multitude on the day of Pentecost, appealing to the triumph which his Master had obtained, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye both see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens, but he saith himself, The LORD said unto *my Lord*," (the promised

Messiah) "Sit thou on my right hand until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made THAT SAME JESUS *whom ye have crucified*, both *Lord* and CHRIST!" Acts ii. 32—36.

Again, the blessed Jesus has *proved himself to be the Christ by his providential visitations from his throne in heaven*. To such a proof he referred his enemies when he stood before the Council. As he had said to the Jews, "When ye have lifted up the Son of Man then shall ye know that I am *He*"—*i. e.* the Christ; so when interrogated by the high priest, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" his answer is "I am: and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven:" (Matt. xxvi. 64)—coming, that is, by those *providential visitations* whereby from the throne of heaven he should vindicate God's supremacy and inflict discomfiture on God's enemies.

For both those terms, the "coming" and the coming "in a cloud" or "in the clouds of heaven" are frequently used in Scripture of God's providential interferences to overwhelm the wicked, and by tremendous catastrophes in their history to proclaim to all, There is a God that judgeth the earth! Look first at Isaiah xix. 1, and you will see how remarkably similar is the language there with that of Jesus in the passage quoted above. "The burden of Egypt;" says the Prophet: "Behold, the Lord *rideth upon a swift cloud*, and shall come into Egypt; and the idols of Egypt shall be moved *at his presence*," (*i. e.* at his coming among them) "and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it—and the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord, and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord." Here, you see, God's "riding on a cloud," and "coming" into Egypt, is the prophetic symbol for his bringing about in that country certain *events*

of history which should inflict on it the punishment it deserved for its opposition to his people—the symbol, in a word, for its invasion, by Sennacherib, and all the calamities which it suffered about that period from intestine anarchy.

Then turn to Isaiah xxxiv. 1—8, and you will find the descent of righteous retribution on the land of Eden described in terms similar, not only to those of Jesus already referred to, but also to the still more startling figures of speech with which he introduces a similar declaration to his disciples, when he says (Luke xxi. 25—27) “There shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars: and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken: and then shall they see the Son of man *coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*” For, what says the Prophet concerning the desolation of Edom? “Come near ye nations to hear, and hearken ye people; let the earth hear and all that is therein, the world and all things that come forth of it, for *the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations*, and his fury upon all their armies; he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. And the mountains shall be melted with their blood; and *all the host of heaven shall be dissolved*, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their host shall fall down,* as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree: for my sword shall be bathed in heaven; behold it shall *come down* upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment;—for it is *the day of the Lord’s vengeance*, and the year of recompences” (*i. e.*

*

— “as moon and stars

*Glance rapidly along the clouded heavens,**When winds are blowing strong.*—WORDSWORTH.

the time in which he shall exact reprisals, shall execute strict retribution) "for the controversy of Zion." Isa. xxxiv. 1—8.

Compare with this, yet further, 2 Samuel xxii. 1—12, and you will find David commending "the Lord's deliverance of him from his enemies, out of the hand of Saul"—a plain historical fact, exhibiting the interposition of God's providential care in his behalf—in language of just similar character. "In my distress" he says, v. 7, "I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God, and he did hear my voice out of his holy temple: then the earth shook and trembled, the foundations of heaven were moved and shook, because he was wroth;—*he bowed the heavens also and CAME DOWN*, and darkness was under his feet; and he rode upon a cherub and did fly; and *he WAS SEEN* upon the wings of the wind; and he made darkness his pavilion round about him, dark waters and *thick clouds* of the skies. The Lord thundered from heaven, and the Most High uttered his voice. And he sent out arrows and scattered them; lightning and discomfited them. And the channels of the sea appeared, the foundations of the world were discovered, at the rebuking of the Lord, at the blast of the breath of his nostrils. He *sent from above*, he took me; he delivered me from my strong enemy and from them that hated me."

And so again, once more, when the Psalmist would celebrate in the most magnificent imagery *the Supremacy of God*, the manifestation of his dominion over all the earth, his *revelation of himself* as the Destroyer of his enemies and the glory of his people, he thus breaks forth: "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof. *Clouds and darkness* are round about him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. A fire goeth before him and burneth up his enemies round

about. His lightnings enlightened the world ; the earth saw and trembled. The hills melted like wax *at the presence of the Lord*, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory." Ps. xcvi. 1—6.

In all which passages, you perceive, the image is the same. The visitation of God, his coming forth out of his place to vindicate his insulted authority, and assert his dignity and power, is likened to the sweep of the tempest and the rushing of the storm—to the wild careering of the hurricane which mixes heaven and earth,* and changes the face of sun and moon and stars, and makes all nature toss in dread confusion. " God," says the prophet Nahum, " is jealous, and the Lord revengeth and is furious. The Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries and he reserveth wrath for his enemies. The Lord is slow to anger, yet he is *great in power* and will not at all acquit the wicked. The Lord *hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet*. The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned *at his presence*, yea the world and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his indignation? And who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him !" Nahum i. 1—6.

And see then with what justice our Lord applies such tremendous imagery to represent the *providential visitations* which, as the Christ, he would bring upon the world ; in which visitations both his friends and enemies should behold the manifest proofs of his exalted dignity. None of the judgments which the prophets depict in such magnificent

* " The whirlwinds" (of Persia) " carried away in their vortex, sand, branches, and the stubble of the fields, and really appeared to *make a communication between the earth and the clouds*."—MORIER, in *Horne*, 3, 68.

terms—not the overthrow of Saul—not the vengeance upon Egypt—not the destruction of Edom—not the most awful manifestations of God's sovereignty—not the most withering march of his all-devastating indignation—at all came up to that visitation of the devoted city Jerusalem, that overthrow of the Jewish state and polity, that terrible judgment on the crucifiers of the Lord of glory, that scattering of the people over all the face of the earth, which Jesus manifestly has in view, in his prophecy on the Mount of Olives, when he declares concerning the Temple whose goodly stones and gifts his disciples were admiring, “There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down;” (Luke xxi. 6)—when he foretells concerning the splendid City which lay stretched out before them, “It shall be trodden down of the Gentiles;” (Luke xxi. 24)—when he assures his disciples that *in this way, and by these signs* his Dignity as the Christ should be made visible, even to the generation that rejected him, even to the disciples who were wondering at his words! “Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.” “Verily I say unto you *This generation shall not pass away* till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away!” Luke xxi. 27, 32, 33.

But then, once more, as certainly will the blessed Jesus *fully manifest himself to be the Christ when he shall come again to judge the quick and dead*. For those his providential visitations, though they respond to, do not exhaust, the meaning of those grand predictions of His coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Even that great historical event, which shewed the power of the exalted Jesus,—the destruction of the Temple, the city, the polity, the very existence, as a nation, of his adversaries—this was, after all, not the fulfilment

but only the first instalment of the threatenings of God : it was a prophecy by facts—an anticipative symbol—a rehearsal on the narrow stage of Judæa of that awful catastrophe which must finally come upon the whole earth, when Christ shall come again, at the end of the world, to judge the quick and dead. For observe, that this same phraseology which (as we have seen) finds its first application in the events which took place within thirty years of our Lord's employment of it,—in his providential visitation for the punishment of the Jews—this is used again by his beloved Apostle, *after that catastrophe had taken place*, to indicate that further, final manifestation of the Dignity of his Master, as the Christ, which, in prophetic vision, far off as it was in fact, he saw close to his astonished eye. “ Behold,” he says, “ he COMETH WITH CLOUDS ; and every eye shall see him ; and they also which pierced him ; and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen !” Rev. i. 7. And herein St. John does but re-echo that original prophecy of the book of Daniel, in which this final triumph of God's sovereignty over all opposing might, and the merging all the kingdoms of the world in the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, is portrayed. “ I saw, in the night,” says the enraptured Seer, “ visions ; and one like unto the Son of man* CAME WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him, and there was given him *dominion and*

* It is to this passage that our Lord manifestly has respect, when he calls himself so frequently “ The Son of man ”—*That* being in human form whom the prophet beheld invested with the sovereignty of the world. And thus he clearly claims for himself the Dignity of the Messiah, by the very title which he ordinarily assumes. For this term, from its connection, in this prophetic vision, with the Personage thus set over the kingdom of heaven, became a proper name of the Christ ; in the same way that the Jews call him “ Messiah-Anani,” *i. e.* “ the cloud-borne Messiah,” from the other feature in this same passage “ the Son of man came with *the clouds (anani)* of heaven.” The

glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him : his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Dan. vii. 13, 14. O glorious prospect ! O triumphant consummation ! Well might the oppressed and insulted Jesus stand before the chief priests and elders unmoved by fear and undisturbed by indignation, when there swept before his eye the vision of that final triumph, which was to him as sure as though it were that moment bursting on the council ; well might he calmly say,—without eagerness, yet without hesitation ; without bravado, yet with no ambiguous answer to the solemn question pressed upon him, Art thou the Christ,—“ I AM : and ye shall see the Son of man ” (that very being spoken of by the prophet Daniel, and to be realized in my history) “ sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven ! ” Mark xiv. 62. Jesus was indeed a gentle Sovereign, but not less a dignified one. He was the Prince of Peace, but not the less of Power. He came to earth “ meek and riding on an ass,” but not the less shall he come on his “ white horse ” of triumph. He sought not his own exaltation, but he will work the establishment of the truth, and justice, and sovereignty of God. He did not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax, but he must ultimately bring forth judgment unto victory ! He sought not his own glory, but there was one who sought and judged, and that one had said, “ Yet have I

close connection of the title with the Dignity, in our Lord’s mind, shows itself especially in Matt. xxvi. 63, 64 ; for when the High Priest adjured him saying, “ Tell us whether thou be *the Christ*,” his answer points directly to this whole description of the Christ in Daniel : “ Thou hast said : ” and though my present condition may seem inconsistent with that dignity yet “ *nevertheless*, hereafter ye shall see *the Son of man*,” spoken of by the prophet, and realized in me, “ sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”

set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession!" There shall come a time when all shall recognize that Jesus is indeed the Christ—when all shall see the final triumph of the Champion, over the Adversary, of God—when the Dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, shall be bound for a thousand years—when there shall be heard a great voice of much people, saying "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honour and power unto the Lord our God! Alleluia! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!"

And where, then, reader, shall you be at that awful day? O put the question earnestly to your conscience! Will you be among those who shall swell that exulting chorus, or—among those who shall be trampled down for evermore? You need not, for the answering this question, strive, with painful effort, to throw forward your imagination into all the splendours of that awful scene—you have only to consider *what is the posture of your mind towards Jesus now*. The present is the index, the anticipation, of the future. What Christ is to you in this world he will be to you in that age to come. And Who, then, is on the Lord's side at this moment? Who? — Who fears, who loves, who adores, who strives to please him as the Christ? Who burns for his honour? Who labours for his glory? Who makes effort, in his personal character, and through all his sphere of life, to cause him *now to reign*—his kingdom, by anticipation to come—his will, in real, however imperfect, commencement, to be done?—And who *does not do this*? Who puts off this? Who is ashamed of this? Who is indifferent to this? Who counts it overwrought enthusiasm to insist on this! O for a true and faithful answer, in the sight of God! O for an answer, if you are indeed Christ's follower, such as shall rejoice, em-

bolden, animate your soul! O for an answer,—if, reader, *you are not* yet Christ's—if you are careless, worldly, irreligious—such as by its awful resonance upon your startled conscience, shall wake you into dread, humiliation, repentance, permanent conversion; an immediate passing from the side of Satan to the side of Christ—from the inheritance of “fire and brimstone storm and tempest” to the inheritance of “power and great glory!”

CHAPTER III.

THE NATURE OF CHRIST.

WHEN the Ethiopian eunuch said to Peter, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" and the Apostle had replied to him "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest," his ready answer was, "I believe that Jesus is the Christ, *the Son of God.*" In these words were comprised his confession of faith. The belief, then, of the primitive Church, the belief of one of the earliest converts of that Church, on which his reception into it by baptism was vouchsafed, was a belief in the Redeemer, not simply as "Jesus,"—*i. e.* as the Saviour from sin; not only as "Christ"—*i. e.* the promised Messiah or Sovereign of the world; but, furthermore, as over and above this "Jesus," and this "Christ," "THE SON OF GOD."

Here then we have, as the shorter Scriptural form of baptismal confession, the very words which we have learned from infancy in our Creed, as part of the faith in which we, too, have been baptized. "I believe in Jesus Christ, GOD'S ONLY SON." And of this confession, having already considered the First Title, which indicates the Office of the Redeemer; and the Second, which indicates his Dignity; we have now to pause upon the third, which indicates his NATURE.

Now, in considering this title, "God's only Son," as applied to him who is both Jesus, and Christ, the question for us will be in *what sense* it is so applied. The fact of its application,

in numerous passages, is undeniable. The *extent of the Idea expressed by it* is the matter for investigation.

In pursuing which we must remind ourselves, at the outset, that the enquiry is purely an historical one. It is not What may we, or others, suppose, from any previous notions of our own, to be the probable meaning of the phrase; but it is simply, What *was* the meaning of the phrase in the minds of those who used it, and to the minds of those to whom they used it. There can be no just interpretation of any ancient records but the Historical one. The grammatical meaning of words and phrases depends upon their *use*, and that use varies according to the relation in which they stand to the person speaking,—the subject he is speaking of,—the men whom he is speaking to,—and the circumstances under which he speaks. And all these are matters to be ascertained by historical enquiry; by throwing back our mind into the time, the place, the company, all the circumstances, in connection with which the terms were used. The same *sound* may be uttered in pronouncing a Chinese word, and an English word; but the idea conveyed by that sound to the mind of a Chinese may be totally different from the idea conveyed by the same sound to the mind of an Englishman. And just similarly with phrases. The same phrase, in the mouth of those who first used it, may have conveyed a very different sense from that in which others may choose to employ it. And it is *the sense in which they first used it* which is to be the single topic of enquiry, for every fair and just interpreter of an ancient record.

Let us ask, then, First, What was the meaning of the phrase “The Son of God,” *in the mind of those who used it*.

We need scarcely mention that it is the use of the distinctive phrase “THE Son of God,” as applied to one individual, Jesus Christ, of which we now speak. It is not uncommon

in Scripture to call men "Sons of God" on account of their piety, or their peculiar privilege as received into His special family. The angels also are called "Sons of God," as belonging to that higher family of purely spiritual beings, comprehended in the sphere of light in which God dwells. But the question is about the meaning of this title when used in the singular, of *one individual*, and of him, moreover, in various relations, and with various circumstances, which render it peculiar to him.

And here we shall find that Jesus is called in Scripture "THE Son of God," first, *to distinguish him from all human beings*, as the heaven-descended Messiah, or Christ. You know the exalted notion conveyed in the Bible, and carefully cherished by the thoughtful Jews, of their promised Deliverer and King. This personage they expected to be of more than human origin. They saw full well that earthly might was utterly insufficient for their help; that not a David with all his valour—nor a Solomon with all his wisdom—nor even a Moses with all his miraculous endowments, could avail either to raise their nation from its debasement, or to raise the individuals of that nation from their corruption. And therefore they looked higher than man, and waited for a King who should be more than man. Take a single proof of this. One Jewish commentator on Isaiah says, upon that declaration of the fifty-second chapter, Behold *my Servant* shall be exalted, and be extolled, and be very high, "this Servant is the King Messiah, who is more exalted than Abraham, though he could say I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord; and more exalted than Moses, though it is written of him, Carry thou this people in thy bosom; for Messiah is exalted *above all the fathers*." And again; another commentator:—"Messiah shall be greater than all the world, for he shall be the Lord of the whole earth." From which expectation arose the objection of

the Jews to Jesus, (John vii. 27.) “We know this man, whence he is” — his merely human origin and birth-place seem clear to us, — “but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is,” — we expect him to be higher, and from a higher source, than any mortal man.

Nor were these expectations the offspring of their own mind; produced by their sense of need, or their desire of aggrandisement. They were, you know, authorised to their full extent, by the promises of God himself. God himself had said concerning his Anointed, “I will make him my First-born, higher than the kings of the earth.” Ps. lxxxix. 27. God himself had vouchsafed to Daniel that prophetic vision of his descending, as from heaven itself, to help his people: — “I saw in the night visions, and Behold, one like the Son of Man came *with the clouds of heaven* and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before Him, and there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom.” Dan. vii. 13, 14.

Now it is as marking out this *heaven-born personage*, the Christ, above all human prophets, priests, and kings, that the phrase “The Son of God” is applied in Scripture to our blessed Lord. When Peter and his brother Apostles would have honoured Jesus, on the Mount of Transfiguration, *along with* Moses, as the mediator of the law, and Elijah as the representative of the prophets, then there came a voice from the cloud that overshadowed them — the voice of God — distinguishing him as far above those holy men, and saying “This is *my beloved SON*, hear ye him.” Matt. xvii. 5. And when St. Paul wishes to mark out Jesus as distinct from all the priests who ministered according to the Jewish ritual, he does so by declaring that “the law maketh men high-priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh THE SON who is consecrated for evermore.” Heb. vii. 28. While, by the same antithesis included in this

same title, he declares his superiority over Moses, the great Lawgiver, and Minister of God. "This man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house;" where you see our Lord recognized as the *very founder* of that family of God's people, of which family Moses, their human lawgiver, was only a part; an upper servant, as it were, in the household of the Lord. For "Moses verily was faithful" (or entrusted with authority) "in all God's house, *as a servant*,—but Christ *as a SON over his own house*." Heb. iii. 3—6. Nor less strikingly is Jesus distinguished by this title, in this sense, as superior, not only to all human lawgivers, prophets, priests, but also to all kings. For when the Angel had declared to Mary concerning her son, "He shall be great, and shall be called *The Son of the Highest*, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and of his kingdom there shall be no end;" you find, from the words which quickly follow, that this title was to be for him the indication of a heavenly origin: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, *therefore* also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called THE SON OF GOD." Luke i. 32, 35.

But more than this. This title is used, in the second place, *to distinguish our blessed Lord from all super-human, or angelic beings*. This superiority also was expected by the Jewish Rabbins to characterize the Christ. "The Messiah" they affirm "is higher than the angels that minister before the throne of God; for though it is said of them (Ezek. i. 18) They were so high that they were dreadful; yet Messiah is still higher than they." And again, "It is of thee O our Messiah, that it is written, Kiss the Son; for thou art Lord over Israel, *Lord of the angels that minister before the throne*,

the Son of the Most High, the Son of God, and the habitation of his love."

And in this sense is Jesus called "The Son of God" by St. Paul ; who claims for him this superiority, from this very title being given to him in the Old Testament. " Being made so much *better than the angels* as he hath obtained a more excellent *name* than they ; for unto which of the angels said he at any time Thou art MY SON, this day have I begotten thee. And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a SON. And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." Heb. i. 13, 14. Nothing can be clearer than that the Apostle uses here this title, " Son of God," to distinguish Jesus as superior to all angelic beings.

But we must go yet further and observe that this title is used of our Lord *to distinguish, and exalt him above all conceivable forms of created being*,—as different from them not in *origin* only—or in *degree*,—but *specially in kind* ; as before all creatures in time, above them in nature—nay himself the Author of their being. For nothing less than this is asserted by St. Paul to the Colossians when he says " God hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of *his* DEAR SON, who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature ; for by him were all things created, that are in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers : all things were created by him and for him ; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Col. i. 13—17. The title, " Son of God " distinguishes our blessed Lord as superior, and anterior, to all *created being*.

And therefore we stop not here; but go on, lastly, to the fact, included, indeed, in that just asserted, but also separately declared in the Word of God, that the title of "The Son of God" *equals our blessed Lord with the Deity himself*. It points him out as partaking of the Father's essence, uncreated and divine. In this sense it is clearly used by St. Paul when he declares that "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by HIS SON; whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being *the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person*, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Heb. i. 1—3. And in this sense does our Lord himself call God, peculiarly and so as he is not to any other being, *his Father*; and asserts his participation in his Father's mind, and will, and living energy, as one with him. "I and my Father are One." John x. 30. "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to THE SON to have life in himself." John v. 26.

Such then is the meaning of the phrase "The Son of God," as applied to Christ, if we take that meaning as it manifestly existed *in the mind of those who used it* of our Lord.

Let us now turn to a second method of Historical interpretation, and enquire what sense the phrase appears to have borne *in the mind of those to whom it was used*. For we have sufficient evidence in the Scripture records not only of the meaning affixed to this term by our Lord and his Apostles, but also of the sense in which it was understood by those, their enemies even, to whom they spoke.

A very few instances will suffice to show this. And first

you will see that the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, (receiving the phrase, of course, in the common acceptation,) understood by it, certainly nothing less than *One of heavenly origin*. For when the chief priests brought our Lord before him, declaring that “by their law he ought to die, because he made himself *The Son of God*,” then, “when Pilate heard that saying he was the more afraid, and went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, *Whence art thou?*” John xix. 7—9. *Whence?* observe—from earth or heaven? of human origin or divine?

But next; other passages show us that the Pharisees, by that accusation just referred to, meant, and complained of, more than even Pilate supposed: even that Jesus had claimed to be not simply of heavenly origin, but also *equal with God*. For this was the claim which had previously enraged them—for which they had accused him of blasphemy—and on account of which they obstinately sought his death. And this claim they all agreed to be contained in our Lord’s calling God *his Father*, in that special sense in which he was not the Father of other men. For when Jesus had said to them, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,” the Evangelist tells us that the Jews “*therefore* sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father,” (his *own special Father*, the words really mean, *πατέρα ἰδιον*,) “making himself” (*i. e.* by the assumption of this phraseology) “*equal with God*.” John v. 17, 18. And on another occasion, when our Lord had said “My Father and I are one,” the sense in which this claim to unity with Deity was understood by those who heard him is at once sufficiently apparent, by their treatment of him for it. “Then the Jews took up stones to stone him.” And when Jesus answered them, “Many good works have I shewed you from my Father, for which of these works do ye stone me?”

their reply was, "For a good work we stone thee not, but for *blasphemy*; and because that thou, being a man, *makest thyself God*." John x. 30—33. And once more; when, in solemn council, they laboured to make Jesus criminate himself, that they might pronounce him guilty of blasphemy, and thus sentence him to death; it was *simply by adjuring him to confess his claim to this one title we are treating of*, that they accomplished their deadly purpose. They sought no more. They wanted only to get him to avow before the judgment seat, what he had said in general conversation, "I am The Son of God," and that was enough. To assume with solemn earnestness such a title was blasphemy and death. Therefore "The high priest said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, THE SON OF GOD." And when Jesus answered "Thou hast said"—*i. e.* Thou hast hit the truth; I am so—"then the High Priest rent his clothes, saying *He hath spoken blasphemy*; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? And they answered and said, He is guilty of death!" Matt. xxvi. 63—66. Such was the sense in which the men with whom Jesus lived, conversed, and acted, received the phrase "The Son of God."

Thus then, by the two legitimate methods which the laws of Historical interpretation prescribe, the investigation into the meaning of a phrase as understood by those that use it—and by those to whom it is used, we have found that the Title, "The Son of God" ascribes to our Lord nothing less than *the participation of the DIVINE NATURE*. All that St. John meant when he wrote "No man hath seen God at any time; the *only-begotten Son*, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him;" John i. 18; and when he spoke of this same glorious being as "The Word, who was in the begin-

ning, and was with God, and WAS GOD." John i. 1, 2. All that St. Paul means when he writes, to the Philippians, that Christ Jesus was, before his incarnation "in *the form of God*," and possessed "*equality with God*." Phil. ii. 6. All, therefore, that the three Creeds of the Christian Church declare, from these same Scriptures of eternal truth, when they confess the Saviour to be not only The Son of God, but "*The only Son*" as distinguished from all human beings to whom the name has been, in any lower sense, applied; and, yet more, "*The Only-begotten Son*," as distinguished from all heavenly beings who however superior to mankind are still, like them, *created* only, not begotten of the Father; nay further, as The "*Begotten before all worlds*," as distinguished from all creative being not by *origin* only, as springing from the essence of the Deity, but in the *timeless* character of that origin; and more still, as "*God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God*," and "*one substance with the Father*," as deriving from the primal fount of Deity that Nature which constitutes him, in all respects, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. O what high and elevating truth is here! How does the Christian's heart expand, and the glow of adoration fire his soul, as he sees brightening to his view, the dazzling splendour of his Master's countenance, till no longer faithless but believing, he falls prostrate at his feet, with that one short, emphatic outcry of entire conviction, "MY LORD AND MY GOD!" John xx. 28.

For, this truth, remember, is no speculative one—no dogma of high metaphysical theology, which may be left to disputants to prate about, while all the practical interests of faith, and hope, and charity remain the same. No! It stands out prominent from the book of God; and so stands out in intimate relation with our peace and our salvation. Only in the Deity

of Christ have we the full assurance of God's love to us—of our acceptance with him — of our triumph over sin. These are Scripture applications of this doctrine to a practical use, which show its essential worth.

For how does the word of God assure us of *God's love to us*? Just by referring to this fact, that God gave for our salvation, not a man, not an angel, not any conceivable highest of created beings, but *His Son*—his *only Son*. “God so loved the world” says Jesus himself, “that he gave” (this, mark you, is the grand convincing proof of that love) “*his only-begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life.” John iii. 16. “If God be for us” argues Paul, “who shall be against us? He that spared not *his own Son*, but delivered him up for us all how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” Rom. viii. 31, 32. “In this was manifested the love of God towards us” says St. John, “because that God sent *his only-begotten Son* into the world, that we might live through him.” 1 John iv. 9. Try to understand the phrase “God's Son,” in all these passages, in any other sense than that which we have deduced from Scripture; try if you can possibly, even for a moment, do such violence to your reason as to look on Jesus only as a man like yourself; and then say where is the nerve and muscle of their argument? It has all evaporated! Where the wondrous love of God they speak of? It has dwindled down into a very meagre thing! Nay, where is the sense—the common sense—of a *man*—a mere earthly creature like ourselves—being “sent into the world”—“given up”—“spared,”—and all as a stupendous proof of heavenly love? O but it *is* love, when God “sent” the partner of his nature!—“gave up” his beloved one!—“spared” him who had dwelt in his bosom from eternity,—for a world of ignorant ungrateful, rebellious sinful men! “Herein, indeed, is love! Not that we loved

God, but that he loved us, and *sent* HIS SON to be the propitiation for our sins !” 1 John iv. 10.

But on the Deity of our Saviour depends equally our assurance of *acceptance with God*. How do we know that Christ’s mediation is more effectual than that of Moses, who was a man of God? his sacrifice more precious than those of the Levitical law, which were sacrifices of God? his intercession more prevailing than that of Aaron, who was a priest of God? Just because our Mediator, our Sacrifice, our Intercessor, is GOD and not mere man—and is therefore able to save to the uttermost those who come to God by him. This is the argument of St. Paul to the Hebrews: “If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who *through the eternal Spirit*” (in his divine and everliving Nature) “offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” Heb. ix. 13, 14. “And seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus *the Son of God*, let us hold fast our profession.” Heb. iv. 14. Christian reader! Cherish this truth, in this relation to your peace and hope! Glory in it. Live upon it. So shall you testify concerning it as Ignatius testifies, “There is one physician, both fleshly and spiritual; made and not made; GOD INCARNATE; true life in death; both of Mary and of GOD: first passible, then impassible; even Jesus Christ our Lord!”

And who, without this truth, can *triumph over sin*? It is in proportion as we hope and trust, that we are nerved to conflict. And who can hope and trust like him who leans on a *divine* Redeemer and fights beneath the banner of a *divine* Captain? “If THE SON shall make you free” says Jesus, “ye shall be free indeed.” John viii. 36. “Who is he that

overcometh the world" asks John, triumphantly, "but he that believeth that Jesus is THE SON OF GOD?" 1 John v. 4. From a divine head I may derive divine strength. The *Son* of God can infuse into me the *Spirit* of God. And with The Spirit of God I can breathe the life of God. And thus I may cope with every enemy—and be alert for every duty—and break through every obstacle; till I reach at last the multitude of the redeemed, and join the chorus of the heavenly *worshippers of Christ as God*, who cry with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing!"—"Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, AND UNTO THE LAMB for ever and ever!" Rev. v. 12, 13.

CHAPTER IV.

THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST.

IN considering the Titles by which our Redeemer is designated in the Apostles' Creed, we have seen that his Office is indicated by the name "Jesus;" his Dignity by that of "Christ;" his Nature by that of "God's only Son." The only remaining title is that which marks out his AUTHORITY, as "OUR LORD."

This title, we say, expresses *the Authority of the Redeemer over us as his people*. It is not, you observe, "The Lord" that he is called, or still more simply "Lord," but it is, with special reference to the persons who recite the Creed, and their relation to the Saviour, "our Lord."

He is, indeed, "The Lord;" and he is saluted in the Scripture as emphatically "Lord," in the highest sense of the appellation, as denoting the Sovereign Possessor and Ruler of the universe—Him who is in the Old Testament called Jehovah,—invested with the name, as he possesses the nature, and exercises the authority, of the eternal Father. In this sense Malachi prophesied of him, "THE LORD shall come to his temple." Mal. iii. 1. In this sense the Psalmist, as quoted by the Apostle to the Hebrews,* addresses him, "Thou, LORD, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of

* Apparently from the Septuagint version, which has κατ' ἀρχὰς τὴν γῆν σου
Κύριε ἰθιμελίωσας. Ps. cii. 25.

the earth ; and the heavens are the works of thine hand : they shall perish ; but thou remainest ; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment ; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed : but thou art the same and thy years shall not fail." Heb. i. 10—12. And in this sense St. Paul declares of him, " The second man is THE LORD from heaven." 1 Cor. xv. 47.

Moreover, Jesus is, and is continually called, " The Lord," as being the Messiah ; the anointed King, commissioned in God's name, and with his authority, to rule over, not his people only, but the world. As said St. Peter to the Jews, upon the day of Pentecost : " Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus which ye have crucified, both LORD and Christ." Acts ii. 36. And as St. Paul declares to the Philippians, " Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. ii. 9—11.

But it is to that more limited sense, to which the relative term " our " directs us, that we have now to confine our attention ; contemplating therein the AUTHORITY of *Jesus in that special relation which he bears to us his followers*. In this sense he calls himself, and is called by others, our " Lord," as being the only authoritative Teacher—Ruler—and Protector, of his people.

Christ is " our Lord," then, First, as being the only authoritative *Teacher* of his people.

So he declares himself to his disciples when he had risen up from supper, and washed their feet. His object at that moment was to teach his apostles a great moral lesson of self-for-

getting love, and this he did, not only by words, but (as so frequently was his custom) by a striking symbolical act. And then he calls upon them to imitate the disposition which by this act he had commended to them. "Ye call me Master and LORD," *i. e.* your authoritative Teacher, as the Jewish pupils were wont to salute their rabbin, "and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your LORD and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." John xiii. 13—15.

When, therefore, we acknowledge Jesus as our Lord we do so as an authoritative Teacher, to whose words we are to listen, whose example we are to follow, and by whose principles and precepts we are to regulate our life. It was in this sense that he fulfilled the promise of God to Moses, "I will raise them up a *Prophet* from among their brethren like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." Deut. xviii. 18. Where observe, as very essential to our right conception of Jesus as a teacher, that he is called a Prophet, not as merely instructing us in certain truths, as any other wise man might do, but as laying before us, emphatically, the truths *of God*,—in God's name—with God's authority—out of God's mouth. A prophet is, emphatically, one who speaks for God, as the Messenger, the Interpreter, the Mouthpiece, of God.* And

* For the term "Prophet" both in Greek and Hebrew, belongs to him who is an *Interpreter of divine oracles*. "Prophets," says Plato, "are the expounders of the mysterious voices and manifestations of the gods." And hence the office of Aaron in relation to Moses, as the channel of his communication to Pharaoh, is designated by this term. "See," says the Lord to Moses, "I have made thee a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be *thy prophet*." Exod. vii. 1. Which is further explained by ch. iv. 15, 16, "Thou shalt speak unto him, and *put words in his mouth*; and he shall be *thy spokesman* unto the people; and he shall be to thee *instead of a mouth*." And so God says to his prophet Jeremiah; ch. xv. 19, "Thou shalt be *as my mouth*."

therefore there is included in this idea not teaching only, but authoritative teaching :—teaching as by a master to his pupils, a Father to his children, a Lawgiver to his subjects, still more, a Seer to those who consult the oracle of his God. Whence it is said immediately after, “It shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto *my words* which *he shall speak in my name*, I will require it of him.” O how awful a relation is it to be the pupil, and scholar, and disciple of Christ ! To come up to him as to a divine oracle to receive from his lips the responses of the Most High ! For while “he that is of the earth is earthly and speaketh of the earth, *he that cometh from heaven is above all*. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth. And he that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that *God is true* ! For he whom God sent *speaketh the words of God* : for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him !” John iii. 31—34. “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh : for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that *speaketh from heaven* !” Heb. xii. 25.

But Jesus is not only, as “our Lord,” our Teacher—our authoritative Teacher ; but he is moreover our *only* authoritative Teacher. “No man hath seen God at any time ; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he only hath *declared him*”—made his will and character entirely

And the express description of “*The Prophet*” himself, indicates the *divine authority* with which he should teach as the Spokesman of the Lord : “I will raise them up *a Prophet*—and will put *my words in his mouth* ; and he shall speak unto them *all that I shall command him*.” Deut. xviii. 18. Whence Jesus declares so frequently ; “He that sent me is true ; and I speak to the world those things *which I have heard of Him*.” “*As my Father hath taught me I speak these things*.” John viii. 26, 28. “I have not spoken of myself ; but he Father which sent me, *He gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak*.—Whatsoever I speak, therefore, *even as the Father said unto me, so I speak*.” John xii. 49, 50.

clear. John i. 18. As he alone speaks forth, in all their purity and fulness, the words of God ; so to him alone must be referred, and with his principles must be compared, all the teaching of other men. He does indeed teach his people *mediately*, by the instrumentality of others, as well as *immediately*, by himself. Even in the days of his flesh he chose out and commissioned messengers who should go in his name through the cities of Judea and proclaim the message that he put into their mouth. And to his Apostles he opened out his mind, with this express intent, that what he told them in darkness they should speak in light, and what they heard in the ear they should preach upon the housetops. And when he left the earth he still more extensively confided the teaching of his people to human agents, authorized and qualified by himself, to speak in his name, and build men up in his truth. "When he ascended up on high he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men ; and he gave some, apostles ; and some, prophets ; and some, evangelists ; and some, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying" or building up into its full proportions, "of the body of Christ." Eph. iv. 8, 11, 12. The office of the ministry was constituted by our Lord himself for the communication, illustration, application, and enforcement of his truth ; and therefore the Apostle says, "As we were *allowed of God* to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak." 1 Thess. ii. 4. And Jesus tells his seventy disciples, whom he sent forth to teach in his name, "He that heareth you *heareth me* ; and he that despiseth you *despiseth me* ; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." Luke x. 16. O awful commission ! O solemn responsibility ! "We are ambassadors for Christ ! As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you *in Christ's stead*, be ye reconciled to God !" 2 Cor. v. 20.

But then—what says our Lord concerning even those messengers whom he has himself appointed? How jealously does he still reserve to himself the supreme authority! How earnestly does he forbid his people to look to his agents, irrespective of himself; to give to the persons *sent*, that unlimited deference, honour, and obedience, which belongs only to the *Sender*! “Be not ye called Rabbi,” *i. e.* Teacher, authoritative Teacher, “for *one is your Master*, even Christ, and *all ye are brethren*. And call no man your Father”—your absolute spiritual guide*—“upon the earth; for *one is your Father*, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters;”—leaders—“for *one is your Master, even Christ.*” Matt. xxiii. 8—10. And see then how the voice of man must sink to nothing, in our estimation, when brought into competition with the voice of Christ. The voice of man, I say, or any body of men; which though it came pouring down upon us like the sound of many waters, and though its hollow roar were echoed to us at every moment, from every side, through every age, must, with the

* This was one of the many titles of authority assumed by the Rabbin, in relation to their pupils. As a term of respect and affection it may be borne with. Joash went down to Elisha, “and wept over him and said, O my father! my father!” 2 Kings xiii. 14. And St. Paul reminds the Corinthians, “Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many *fathers*; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.” 1 Cor. iv. 15. But in the sense of *authority* as the head of a School, to whose words his pupils should blindly swear, this same Apostle—though an Apostle!—expressly disclaims any such relation to these same Corinthians. “Not for that we have *dominion over your faith*, but are *helpers* of your joy: for *by faith*,” your own personal conviction, and that alone, (cf. Rom. xiv. 23, 5), “ye stand.” 2 Cor. i. 24. For “who is Paul, and who is Apollos, but *ministers* by whom ye believed,” the directors of your confidence towards a superhuman and invisible Teacher, “even as *the Lord* gave to every man.” 1 Cor. iii. 5. And yet the Romanist calls one man,—not from reverence simply, but with abject prostration as before supreme authority, yea infallibility,—one man, above all others on the earth, not only a Father, but *the* “Father,” *the* “Papa,” *The* “Pope!”

Christian, have no force,—must by the Christian be indignantly—say rather, with the placid smile of calm conviction, quietly though steadily—repelled as but the clamouring down of his spiritual freedom; except so far as from the evidence of the *primitive documents of the sacred record* he has good reason to believe it harmonizing with the voice of Christ. Remember, Reader, that voice of Christ you *now possess*. You have preserved to you the permanent manifestation of his mind and will, in the authentic records of those who heard its precious sound, as they are laid up in the sacred Canon of the New Testament. Those records are to the Christian church what the tables of the Law, in the ark of the Testimony, were to the Jews. Those records you are to make use of for yourself as that law was to be made use of by the Jews: “These words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up; and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be to thee as frontlets between thine eyes, and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thine house, and upon thy gates.” Deut. vi. 6—9. You have got these words of Jesus, I remind you, through God’s providence, in your hands. Take care that you keep them. Hold them fast. Let no man “spoil you of them through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and *not after Christ*.” Col. ii. 8. You can read them. Take care that you do read them. Study them—make yourself familiar with them—enter into them—treat them, now they are written down on paper, just as you would have treated them had you been among the crowds of the unlearned who “heard them gladly” when they first fell from his lips, and “wondered at the gracious words

which proceeded out of his mouth." Would those words have been unintelligible to you, *hearing* them? Neither need they be unintelligible to you, *reading* them. Were Christ's *spoken* words sent forth in all their nakedness into the ears of the surrounding multitude, to be received by them according to their wants; their consciences; their common sense; their personal reflection, unfolding and applying them to their hearts; and do Christ's words *written* require for their saving apprehension anything more? Would you have thought it strange if, when you were eagerly pressing on that divine Teacher to catch his words, some Pharisees around you had suggested, Do not suppose you can discover his meaning by what he says—he is far too deep for that; we know more about these things, and we can best explain them to you; hear him through our ears; judge of him through our judgments?—And that, too, when you had just been hearing The Teacher himself declare, "If *any man* have ears to hear let him hear!"—Then, I say, the *privilege*, yea the solemn *duty*, which, *as a hearer*, Christ himself would have called you to, do you, *as a reader*, jealously hold fast. You have to do with God and not with man. You are accountable to him who is *your Lord*, and not to those who are only your brethren. By *Christ's word* on your personal responsibility, at the last great day, you will be judged; (John xii. 48) therefore of *Christ's word*, as it has been preserved to you in authentic documents, must you form your personal judgment, by which judgment to judge yourself, by anticipation, now.

Do I deny by this the need of caution, enquiry, deliberation, readiness to seize every help that may assist your own conclusion? Do I mean that like an idle bystander, or a heedless passenger who has come in for just the conclusion of a sentence, you are self-sufficiently to exclaim, "I know all that he meant to say!" without pausing on his words; without waiting

for their full developement; without comparing notes with others who have heard him from a more favourable situation; or for a longer time; or on other occasions? Nay but I grant, upon the contrary,—I contend,—that every one who is in earnest to be saved will hang with trembling interest on the lips of Him who “has the words of eternal life;” will try again and again to profit by every opportunity of getting at his meaning in all its depth and fulness; will listen to every suggestion, will be thankful for every hint, will like the Ethiopian eunuch respectfully make every enquiry, by which he *may be assisted* to understand the words of Christ. But still, it will be the *words of Christ*, and these alone, to which he looks; whose authority he recognizes; before which with implicit faith he bows; and by whose solemn law his conscience will be bound. And therefore amidst all our needful self-mistrust; our docility; our readiness to consult and be assisted by, those who are standing nearer, as it were, to Christ than ourselves; (and all this becomes our duty just in proportion to the deficiency of our own opportunities and powers;) still, the truth for each man, at the last, must be that which he himself perceives, from all these helps, to be the *word of Christ*; and the authority to which alone he must submit his mind, his heart, his will, his life, must be the *authority of Christ*. For O the awful importance of looking up simply to “Our Lord!” of feeling that we are accountable for all we think, as well as do—for the judgments of our mind as well as the disposition of our will—before that Lord! “It is a very small thing” said St. Paul, “that I should be judged of man’s judgment,—for *he that judgeth me is THE LORD!*” 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4. And what, then, are men to us, compared with Christ? What the best and wisest, set by the side of Christ? What the whole Christian world when brought into competition with Christ? Was any one of them crucified for you? or were you baptized into

their name? Is any man, or any body of men, to give the law to our moral judgment, as our Master? or may we call them, with an absolute surrender of our conscience, Lord? Nay, says the fervid Apostle, "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should *not be the servant of Christ.*" Gal. i. 9, 10.

And this matter becomes still more serious when we go on to consider, in the second place, that in confessing Jesus as "our Lord" we acknowledge him also as our only authoritative *Ruler*.

For he reserves to himself the ultimate authority in governing, as well as teaching, his people. As we may not receive as *truth*, what we are persuaded he has not taught; so neither may we perform as *duty*, what we are persuaded he has not commanded. He has appointed, indeed, several ranks and orders of men in his holy church, "Apostles, prophets, helps, governments;" and such spiritual rulers, in administering Christ's laws, are clothed with the authority, and should meet with the deference, which belongs to the civil Ruler in administering the acknowledged law of the land. "Obey them that have the rule over you," says St. Paul to the Hebrews, "and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy and not with grief: for that would be unprofitable for you." Heb. xiii. 17. "We beseech you brethren," he writes to the Thessalonians, "to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. But then—this same Apostle prescribes in another place concerning all things that are not expressly ruled and determined

by Christ's statutes, "*Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.*" "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own Master" (or Lord) "he standeth or falleth; yea, God is able to make him stand." "He that regardeth the day regardeth it *unto the Lord*, and he that regardeth not the day, *to the Lord* he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth *to the Lord*, and giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, *to the Lord* he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live *unto the Lord*; and whether we die, we die *unto the Lord*; whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be LORD both of the dead and living." Rom. xiv. 1—9.

And O consider, then, what we are speaking of now, as being professed by us when in our Creed we acknowledge Christ as "our Lord." Not of opinions, but of practical doings—not of doctrine but of works—not of what we are to believe merely, but of what, in consequence of such belief, we are to *do*;—to do, in all the branches and details of moral duty;—the regulation of our dispositions—the ordering of our conduct—the formation of our character, as the offering of a ready obedience to our Sovereign Ruler. You say repeatedly in your Creed, "I believe in Jesus Christ *our Lord.*" Is there anything which *that Lord* forbids, that you are indulging in? Is there anything which *that Lord* commands, that you are making light of—overlooking—shrinking from? O take care that there come not to you from your heavenly Master that expostulation, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and *do not the things which I say!*" Yea, that authoritative declaration, "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that *doeth the will* of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me, in that day,

Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name," (*i. e.* as thy professed disciples,) "and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me all ye workers of iniquity!" Matt. vii. 21—23. The ten virgins were all servants of the bridegroom; they all acknowledged his authority; they were all waiting for his appearing; they all hoped to partake of his marriage supper; but when five of them—who had not been, I pray you to observe, rebels to his rule, had not cast off his service, had not denied his name, and could have said, as we do, "I believe in Jesus Christ our Lord," but who were simply *negligent of their duty* to this Lord,—when these five foolish virgins started up at last, and ran to the palace door, and knocked, and cried out "*Lord, Lord, open to us;*" "he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not!" Matt. xxv. 1—12. O may that mighty Ruler, whose you are and whom you serve, forbid that it be so with you! Now, may you do his will—now, may you be alive to your duties towards him—now, may you serve him, in all the relations of your daily life, "in singleness of your heart, *as unto Christ*; not with eye-service as a men-pleaser, but as *the servant of Christ*, doing the will of God from the heart, with good-will doing service *as to the Lord*, and not to men;" "knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth the same shall he receive *of the Lord*; for *we serve* THE LORD, CHRIST!" Eph. vi. 5—8. Col. iii. 24.

And do you feel the difficulty of doing this? Are you but too conscious of your sinfulness, your weakness, your insufficiency, so that even when you take Christ as your *Teacher*, and strive to serve him as your *Ruler*, you are disappointed, "let and hindered," every day? Then look on Jesus, in the

third place, as “your Lord” as being also the authoritative *Protector* of his people.

For how is that term “Lord” employed by Paul, in its relation to Christ’s people? In a sense O how endearing! how encouraging! “Husbands” he says to the Ephesians, “love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;—for no man ever yet hated his own flesh but loveth it and cherisheth it, *even as THE LORD the church.*” Eph. v. 25—29. Is there Authority in Jesus over us? Absolute authority! But an authority how tempered, softened, made to tell upon the heart, as well as on the will—yea on the will through the heart—seeing that it is the authority not merely as of a Teacher over his disciples—as of a Master over his servants—but as of *a husband over his wife*: seeing that we confess him, and surrender ourselves to him as our Lord, with all the affection as well as the reverence, the freedom as well as the submissiveness, with which “the holy women in old time, who trusted in God, were in subjection to their own husbands; even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him LORD!” 1 Peter iii. 5, 6. The church is not the servant merely, she is the bride, of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. “Hearken O daughter and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty; for he is THY LORD, and worship thou him.” Ps. xlv. 10, 11.

Dear reader—let me beseech you, take this particular of the character of your Redeemer to your heart: meditate on it for yourself; give it its full force; let it speak to your best affections; *feel* what he is to you, as *your Lord* in this most animating sense;—how he has put on you his own most glorious name, and presents you to the Father as sacred and well-pleasing to Him, in himself;—how he endows you with the

ample dowry of his grace;—how he has made over to you the inheritance of his never-fading glory;—how he leans over you with the tenderest affection;—how he watches you with the most assiduous care;—how he puts forth, to defend you, his mighty arm;—how he makes your sorrows and your joys his own; condescends to your infirmities; feels for your wants; is jealous for your honour; will adorn you with the jewels of his holiness. Is there any feeling which you cannot open out to Christ as thus your Lord? Is there any blessing which you cannot expect from Christ as thus your Lord? Is there any extent of confidence which you cannot repose in Christ, as thus your Lord? “For thy Maker is thine husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name!”

CHAPTER V.

THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST.

WE have gone now through the Titles of our blessed Lord, as they are recited in the Apostles' Creed. The next subject which it presents to us is the mysterious fact of his INCARNATION:—"WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY."

Now in this subject there are two things to be noticed; First, the Fact itself which the Creed commemorates; Secondly, the Reasons which the Scriptures intimate for this Fact.

Looking, First, to THE FACT ITSELF here commemorated, we must take care to remind ourselves *of whom* the Creed is speaking—what is the antecedent to this relative clause—when it declares "*who* was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." The person to whom it refers by the pronoun "*who*" is no less than that exalted being, one of whose titles is "God's only Son." And the fact therefore of his conception and birth into this world can be expressed in no terms less than these—*He who is perfect God became, by the Incarnation, perfect man.* The *mode* indeed of such a descent of the Godhead into the form of manhood it were vain to enquire, because impossible to know, but *the Fact* is so asserted in Scripture, as to constitute an essential part of the Christian faith. Thus, St. Paul declares to the Galatians, iv. 4, "When the fulness of the time was come," when all things were ripe

for the manifestation of that saving help, which the Father had long intended and promised for this fallen world, then, "God sent forth," dispatched from the heavenly regions where he dwelt in the bosom of the Eternal, "HIS SON." And this "Son" so sent forth on this errand of mercy "was made" (continues the Apostle), "of a woman;" was born into this world a human child. So also writes St. John; who after he had spoken of "THE WORD of God, who was in the beginning, and was with God, and was God," goes on to assert that "*this Word was made flesh*, and dwelt among us." John i. 14. And St. Paul again; Phil. ii. 6, 7, when he declares that He who was "in the form of God" and "equal with God," "took upon him the form of a servant," *i. e.* one subordinate to God, an agent in his work; "and was made in the likeness of men." The *same being* who from one point of view is beheld as "God; of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds," is, in these passages expressly, and throughout the Scripture by implication, set before us in another point of view as "Man, of the substance of his mother, born in the world."

But the words of our Creed assert, yet further, that this descent of the Divine into the human took place exactly *according to the inspired predictions*, both as to time, and place, and circumstance, of the word of God. It was not enough that the Son of God should become the Son of man, but he must do so "under the law"—as a Jew—as that particular Jew who had so long been promised and looked out for, for the saving of the world—The Christ: under the circumstances, therefore, and according to the manner which had been foretold concerning The Christ. And these are the circumstances, and this the manner, which are commemorated by those clauses of our Creed, "conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."

For the prophets had foretold concerning The Christ that he should be born of the family, and in the very birth-place, of the royal David; the king whom God had anointed over Israel, as a type of the future Messiah. Jeremiah had prophesied, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth—and this is his name whereby he shall be called THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. And Micah had foretold, still more minutely concerning the birth-place of David, "Thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall HE come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting." Micah v. 2. And accordingly when the fulness of time for the accomplishment of these prophecies was come, "the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, *of the house of David*," and announced to her, "Thou shalt bring forth a son and shalt call his name Jesus,—and the Lord God shall give unto him *the throne of his father David*." Luke i. 26—32. And though Joseph and Mary were at that time living at Nazareth, a town of Galilee, yet by a divinely ordered concurrence of circumstances they "went up from Galilee into Judea, into *the city of David* which is called *Bethlehem*, because Joseph was of the house and lineage of David: and so it was that while they were there the days were accomplished that Mary should be delivered; and she brought forth her first-born son." Luke ii. 4—7. And thus "Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, as it is written by the prophet!" Matt. ii. 1—5.

But more than this. It was foretold by those same inspired men that The Christ should be born, though of the race of David as to legal descent, yet, nevertheless *of a Virgin Mother*.

This was the sign which had been given by the Lord to Ahaz through Isaiah, "Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Isaiah vii. 14. And accordingly, St. Matthew tells us that "the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise; when as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." Matt. i. 18. Where you see the Incarnation of the Redeemer characterized by the direct exertion of divine energy:—that same energy which created the first man, and which therefore could, at any time, equally "create a new thing in the earth." "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee," said the angel to the Virgin, "and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke i. 35.

Such then are the simple *Facts* declared in Scripture concerning the Incarnation of Christ. Facts which must stand, amidst all their inconceivableness, as true and certain, till Scripture itself be overturned, and all the piled up mass of cumulative evidence for its authority have been crumbled down and scattered to the winds. These Facts are, first, that God was manifest in the flesh; and secondly, that in so manifesting himself he took on him the person of the promised Christ with all those marks by which he had before been designated and distinguished, by the prophets of old. These Facts are commemorated in the Creed, not as the product of theological speculation, but as *matters of history*. And as matters of history they are authenticated to us "by most certain warrants of holy Scripture." And as so authenticated let us receive them, even as Mary submitted to an angel's affirmation; and let us welcome them with her adoring praise; "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, for he hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his

mercy, as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever!"*

But the Bible does not stop at the simple declaration of the *fact* of the Incarnation of Christ; it furnishes in many places, important intimations of THE REASONS why in this way and no other God vouchsafed to visit and redeem this fallen world.

For you will find, upon investigation, that the Bible represents the Incarnation of Christ as vouchsafed, first, *in order to the re-union of the Father with his outcast children*. The *Idea* of the Incarnation—that transcendental truth of which the sensible fact is at once the symbol, and the realization—is the *Idea of God re-united to man*. That which reason had long felt the need of, that which the very instinct of human nature had attempted in various ways to obtain for itself, is *actualized*—made a fact,—in the Incarnation of God's own Son. The most painful feeling mixed up with our fallen condition is that of *separation*, thereby, *from God*. We cannot begin to think of him without a dim and painful consciousness at the same time, that we are far off from him—that there exists a great gulph between the Divine and the human, and especially between the Holy and the sinful—that we are so distant from his nature and perfections that it is more from the impulse of a pressing necessity, than with the energy of hope, that we “seek the Lord, if peradventure,” by some not to be expected chance, “we may” like blind men groping in the dark, “*feel after him*† that we may find him.”

* Hoc est Christum cognoscere, *beneficia ejus cognoscere*; non quod isti (scholastici) docent, ejus naturas, *modos incarnationis*, contueri.—MELANTHON, *Loci Theol.* i. ed.

† ψηλαφῆσαι Acts xvii. 17. The word used by the Seventy, in Deut. xxviii. 29, “Thou shalt *grobe* at noon-day as the blind *gropeth* in darkness.” And Isa. lix. 10, “We grope for the wall like the blind.”

His power and wisdom, nay and something of his goodness, as spread over the vast fabric of the universe, we seem obliged to acknowledge ; but any connection of Him with ourselves, in personal relation, we cannot realize. Our very effort to distinguish him from the world on which he acts, removes yet farther from us the idea of communion with him. With distinction we fall into division. Besides, the idea of the Holy One seems incompatible with the idea of sinful ones like ourselves. In our worse states of mind we cannot *bear* to bring the two conceptions into juxtaposition ; in our better states we cannot *venture* to do so. And hence the feeling of the ungodly, in every generation, has always been, "Is not God in the height of heaven ? And behold the height of the stars how high they are ! How doth God know ? Can he judge through the dark cloud ?" And "is there knowledge in the Most High ?" While the feeling, on the other hand, of those whose souls, even in the night of Paganism, were yearning towards the Being in whom they felt they lived and moved, was that of doubt and apprehension, lest the very majesty and purity of the Unseen must necessarily prevent His condescending to the meanness and corruption of humanity. "I do not throw away all thought of the Deity" said one, "but so much do I reverence him, and count him of such surpassing dignity, that I can never persuade myself that he can need my service ; for be well assured that could I but believe that God bestows a thought on man I should be the last to be careless of his favour."* There is a native longing, in the midst of an acquired dread, in the human mind to have communication with God.

And hence the craving for such communication which stirs in every one that begins to know himself, and his relation to

* Xenoph. Mem. Socr. i. iv. 4.

an invisible world. The wish of intercourse with Deity has been the fruitful parent of the thought. The poetic legends of the old Mythology are but the embodiment of the Idea of a relation, an intercommunion, between heaven and earth. The gods descending to earth, the heroes being raised to heaven—appearances—alliances—sojournings of the immortals in a mortal form—all tell us what men longed for, and what they *therefore* believed. So again, the craving for *enlightenment* from on high was as strong as that for personal communication and help. Hence the whole system of divination—the pretensions (to be traced, perhaps, as much to enthusiasm as imposture) to inspiration and oracular influence; the belief that poets, lawgivers, and statesmen were not without their secret interviews with Deity in the awful forest or the myrtle grove. And even the philosophers, while they smiled at the mythology of their country as fabulous, yet were not the less possessed with the *Idea* whence that mythology sprang, and yearned and strove within themselves to realize by mental elevation the vision of Deity, the sense of union with, of emanation from, the all-originating Spirit. The self-deification of the Stoics;* the contemplation of the Platonists of Alexandria; the physical ecstacy sought after by the Bonzes of India; the dream of re-absorption into the divine essence indulged by the Buddhists of Burmah; all are but testimonies, from quarters the most distant and most diverse, of this one desire of outcast human nature, “O to know God, find God, be re-united to God!” Earth, by the fall has been separated off from heaven. Man has been banished from Paradise, the garden of the Lord’s especial presence. He feels that he is dependent on a higher being, and yet that from that higher being he is cut off. He has

* *ἑκάστου νοῦς θεός, καὶ ἐκείθεν ἐρρῶνκεν.*—ANTONINUS.

a Father, yet he is an orphan. He lives *by* God, and yet he lives not *with* God. And therefore, with aspirations continually beaten downward, and endeavours continually baffled, he seeks Re-union with the Source from whence he sprang—he complains with Job, “Behold I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand that I cannot see him!”—he exclaims, with that same patriarch, “Oh, that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!”—and he cries with the Apostle Philip, “Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us!”

To which instinctive craving of our nature, the Father has condescended in the *Incarnation of his Son*. The grand Idea of the Incarnation, and of the Person of Christ as the God-man, is that of *Deity united with humanity*. It so knits together the Divine and the human as to do away all feeling of strangeness, alienation, between heaven and earth—and to associate the conceptions, seemingly so incompatible, of the Infinite and the finite; the Eternal and the temporal; the Almighty and the feeble. The Incarnation of Christ is God coming down to manifest himself to man—to embody himself in man—to enter into vital union and communion with the “reasonable soul” of man. “Show us the Father,” said the anxious Philip. “Have I been so long time with you,” answers the divine Redeemer, “and hast thou not known me, Philip? *He that hath seen me hath seen the Father*; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that *I am in the Father and the Father in me*? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but *the Father that dwelleth in me*, he doeth the works.” John xiv. 9—11.

But, secondly, the Incarnation of the Son of God in the per-

son of Jesus Christ is represented in Scripture, as vouchsafed, *in order to the Restoration to the Father, of his outcast children.* "God sent forth his Son," says St. Paul to the Galatians, iv. 4, "made of a woman, made under the law, *to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*" And this is that reason for the Incarnation which the same Apostle argues out at length in the second chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews; where he shows,—in opposition to the prejudices of the Jews, who looked contemptuously on a human, and especially a dying, Christ; and would rather have had the Lord of angels come to their rescue in the splendour of his divine majesty—that Jesus was indeed made for a little time lower than the angels, but this only *because it was essential to the end for which he came.* For that end was not the rescue only, of his people, but their rescue by his own death in their stead; not the restoration, simply, of God's fallen children, but their restoration by his personal intercourse with them, to teach, encourage, give them an example that they should walk in his steps. "We see Jesus" says the Apostle "made a little lower* than the angels *for the suffering of death*, that he, by the grace of God, should *taste death for every man.* For it *became him*" (there was a moral propriety and necessity) "for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings; for both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of *flesh and blood* he also himself likewise *took part of the*

* Or rather, (according to the margin of our bibles; Chrysostom, and Augustin) "a little while inferior to." Βεῶντι, Acts v. 34: "He commanded to put the Apostles forth *a little space*" (of time). Not even to angels was the Messiah inferior, except for a short moment—in order to a specific object.

same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil ; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels " (or rather, he came not for the redemption of angels,) " but he took on him the nature," (he came for the redemption of) " the seed of Abraham ; wherefore in all things it behoved him " (there was a moral necessity arising from the nature of the work that he had undertaken) " to be made *like unto his brethren* that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God ; to *make reconciliation for* the sins of the people." O what grace and love are here ! That the Son of God should reduce himself to the condition of suffering humanity for *the redemption of that humanity* from the wretchedness in which it lay ! " For us men, and *for our salvation*," emphatically adds the Nicene Creed, " he came down from heaven." For this salvation is no such mechanical process that, like the inanimate creation, it may be spoken into being by God's mere voice of might. Salvation is a *spiritual* effect which can be wrought out only by *spiritual* means. It is a *moral* creation which requires a *moral* process. And therefore, not the Son of God himself could effect it but by becoming the Son of man, to carry on that process, and supply these means. Salvation is no magical metamorphosis, but a mental transformation. And to produce this mental transformation Christ was born into the world, and taught, and suffered, and bled, and died. Men were ignorant and needed instruction. Christ came as man to teach them and unveil to them the whole truth concerning God, and his relation to them, and his purposes for them. For none could do this, in its fulness, but the incarnate Son. Not Moses, with all his visions of the Almighty ; for the skirts only of his glory did he see. Not the Prophets, with all their inspiration, for on them the Spirit

was poured only by measure — in occasional and limited influxes. But only HE who is in the bosom of the Father could *declare*, or make him *clearly* known. “No man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven; even the Son of man which is in heaven.” John iii. 13. “He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God, for God giveth *not the Spirit by measure unto him.*” John iii. 34. “No man knoweth the Father save THE SON, and he to whomsoever THE SON will reveal him.” Matt. xi. 27.

But more than this. Men are worse than ignorant: they are corrupt and guilty in the sight of God. They need, not simply instruction in the knowledge of God; they need even more imperatively reconciliation to the favour of God. And for this Christ came in the flesh. To manifest to us embodied compassion—to show by his gracious invitations; his pitying condescensions; his healing, and restoring, and life-giving interpositions; his exercise of the power of forgiving sins on earth; that God’s essential character is *Love*. Yea infinitely more than this:—To remove the obstacles that impede the outpouring of that love—to harmonize its exercise with the demands of righteous equity—to make a way for pardon of the guilty by suffering in his person all the penalties of their guilt—to die for us, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God—for this Christ came in the flesh. “Herein, indeed, is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent HIS SON *to be the propitiation for our sins.*” 1 John iv. 10.

But, one more reason is supplied to us in Scripture for the Incarnation of the Son of God. It was vouchsafed for the *sustaining in the Father, his no longer outcast children*. Christ’s union with humanity unites humanity with God. And that union once commenced in the individual soul, through faith

in the reconciling and restoring work of the God-man, is maintained and kept up, day by day, by looking up to him as our Representative—our elder brother—who has run for us the course which we must tread; has gone, as man, through all the vicissitudes which we can meet with; and now reigns, as man, in that triumphant bliss to which the Father has exalted him; and with him all who are his brethren. In Christ we have the sympathies of Deity brought down to our level. He took our nature, with its manifold experiences, that we might find in him, not a Redeemer simply, but a *Friend*, to understand us; go along with us; feel with us; help us. “In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren,” says St. Paul, “*for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*” Heb. ii. 18. And again; “We have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us *therefore* come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need.” Heb. iv. 16. O what a blessed thought is this! That in every trial, external or internal—of mind, or body, or estate,—we have in the Eternal Son of God a sympathising friend! One who became man like ourselves, for this very end, that being *human*, he might be *humane* towards man! One who, we are sure, will show us *kindness*, for he is of the same *kind* or *kin*! One from whom we may expect the tenderest *brotherly love*; for “he is not ashamed to call us *brethren*!” Nay, One who was so “*made in all things* like unto his brethren” that there is no form of trial we can be exposed to which he has not gone through for us; and under which, therefore, we may not be sustained by the encouraging thought, My Lord has suffered this for me; and can enable me to suffer it with him! Are you in poverty? The Son of God was poor, and had not where to

lay his head. Are you depressed with sickness and infirmity and mortality? The Son of God, too, being weary, craved for drink—being hungry, sought for food—being faint, exclaimed, “I thirst!”—being in agony, did sweat as it were great drops of blood—being exhausted, bowed his head and gave up the ghost! Or do the tears of desolation bedew your cheeks?—are you bereaved of those you love? The Son of God, too, knew what such bereavement is; at the grave of Lazarus “Jesus wept!” Or does your trial come from an ungodly world? Are you exposed to the scoffs of vulgar animosity, or to the not less painful coldness of more polished enmity? The Son of God, remember, “was reviled, but he reviled not again: he suffered, yet he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously!” Nay, and are you agitated by the anxieties of temptation, the assaults of the Evil One, the difficulty of sustaining your communion with your heavenly Father? The Son of God, too, was “tempted of the devil.” The Son of God “prayed, being in an agony.” The Son of God exclaimed upon the cross, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me!” The Son of God “was in all points tempted like as you are;” but he foiled the Tempter, *he remained untouched by sin!*

And O then to remember, finally, that as Christ became incarnate to bring himself into communion with our human infirmities; so we, upon the other head, must become regenerate, to be brought into communion with his divine purity! That conception of Jesus by the Holy Ghost, is not merely a mysterious *fact*; it is also a significant symbol. As, in Christ Jesus, God was manifest in the flesh, so, through faith in Christ Jesus, must the Spirit of God take up his dwelling in our hearts. “The Word was made flesh” says St. John, “and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; and *of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.*” John i. 14, 16.

For, "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become *the sons of God*, even to them that believe on his name; which were born," (*begotten*) "not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but *of God*." John i. 12. "By that same grace," says St. Augustin, "through which Christ was made man, are we, on our believing, made Christian men." "That," says St. Jerome, "which once was born of Mary, is daily born in us."* "I believe" says Bp. Beveridge, "that Christ, the Son of God, became the Son of man, that I, a son of man might become a son of God...I believe that in the same propriety of speech that my earthly father was called the father of my natural self, is God the Father of my spiritual self." "We are commanded to be holy," says Bp. Pearson, "and that, too, even as he is holy. We bring no such purity into the world; nor are we sanctified in the womb. But as he was sanctified at his conception, so are we at our regeneration. He was conceived, not by man, but by the Holy Ghost; and we are 'not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God!' The same overshadowing power which formed his human nature, reformeth ours. He which was born for us upon his incarnation, must be born within us upon our regeneration." Reader, do you *thus* know the Incarnation of Jesus and its practical benefits? Is "Christ formed in you?" Are you "born from above?" Has "God made known to you the riches of the glory of this mystery,—which is *Christ in you*, the hope of glory?"

* Quod semel natum est ex Maria, quotidie et in nobis nascitur. Comm. in Ps. lxxxiv. 17.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

CHRISTIANITY is emphatically an historical religion. Not a system of theoretical divinity—a collection of conjectures and disputations on speculative truth; but *a record of certain facts*, which came under the personal notice of competent and honest witnesses; were by those witnesses proclaimed to their co-temporaries, and by those co-temporaries being received, have been, through successive hands transmitted to us, as the history of Christ, his person, his sayings, his doings, his sufferings, his triumph. The Gospel of Christ is accurately—*“The glad tidings concerning Christ.”*

But then, Christ's history is throughout symbolical. That is; not only plain, and well-attested matter of fact; but matter of fact which has in it a *doctrinal significance*. The events of our Lord's life are not only true as regards the history of the *man* Jesus, but they contain within themselves a representation of what is true concerning the *men* whom he came to save. That which our Lord became and did and suffered, he became and did and suffered, not simply as *a man*,—one among the myriads of human beings; but as *The man*,—the type and representative of all human being. What he was and did, as an individual, he was and did for the race whose nature he took. So that we have this double interest in the records of his life that they are to us, not only the testimony concerning one on whom we repose our faith and hope, but, at the same time, the symbol of the privileges which by that faith and hope we per-

sonally enter into. Was Jesus born for us from above? This is a symbol of our Regeneration; or reunion with the Father by his Spirit. Did he die for us on the cross? This is a symbol of our Justification; or reconciliation with the Father through his sacrifice. Did he rise again for us from the dead, and ascend up into heaven? This is a symbol of our Exaltation to the presence of the Father through his intercession. Will he come again for us, to put down every enemy, and judge the quick and dead? This is a symbol of our future triumph through his power over death and hell.

You see then the deep personal interest with which these several facts concerning Christ, which we recite so constantly in our Creed, should be commemorated by us. You see why the Church, in directing that this composition form a part of our daily service, had in view not merely the preserving a memorial of what is past; but the nourishing, by such memorial, our present faith, and peace and holiness, and hope. The facts of Christianity deserve our constant meditation, because they constitute the very *doctrine*, as well as the *history* of Christianity. They have a perpetual as well as temporary, a universal as well as particular, truth: they are at once portraits and ideals.

Thus, in the first great Fact concerning Christ commemorated in the Creed, his Incarnation, we have seen that there is included the Idea of our Regeneration—our Re-union to the Father—restoration to his image—sustentation in communion with his Spirit.

A similar bearing on our spiritual welfare is comprised in the next Fact which demands our consideration; the Death of Christ—all that is commemorated by those words of the Creed, “HE SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE, WAS CRUCIFIED, DEAD AND BURIED; HE DESCENDED INTO HELL.”

For, all the various particulars here enumerated bring

before us just that one truth, which our Second Article maintains,—that Jesus “truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, *and to be a sacrifice*, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.” The *historical certainty* of Christ’s death, and the *doctrinal meaning* of that death—the Fact and the Idea—the Symbol and the Truth symbolized—these are what we have to dwell upon in this chapter.

The HISTORICAL CERTAINTY of Christ’s death is declared in the Creed in so many terms, and with so much repetition, because of the relation of this certainty to the miracle of the Resurrection; and the necessity that we should be well assured that he who rose again had been truly and entirely dead. Nor was it less needful to insist on this point, that Christ “*truly* suffered,” on account of the errors which were at one time brought into the Church by those who, being ashamed of the scandal of the cross, and (like the Jews of our Lord’s own time) unwilling to believe that He who was the Christ, the Prince of Life, could possibly die—or he who was Divine could suffer—or he who came to destroy death should go down into the realms of death—maintained that this whole scene of ignominious humiliation was only an *appearance*, not a reality. In opposition to which groundless fiction, you are referred in the Creed to all the circumstances of the time, the manner, the consequences, of the death of Jesus, as plain, literal, well-attested facts.

As to the *Time*, “he suffered under Pontius Pilate,” when Judæa was under the presidency of that Roman Governor, whom every one knows to have administered the affairs of that province for ten years, from the twelfth to the twenty-second year of the Emperor Tiberius Cæsar; that is from the year of our Lord 26 to 36; and who himself, in his official

reports to the Emperor, makes mention of Jesus and his execution.

As to the *Manner* of his death, our Lord was "crucified;" a mode of punishment the more important to be recorded, not only because of its connection with the end for which Christ died, but as illustrating the wondrous way in which God accomplishes his purposes, and brings to pass things which to the judgment of man seem irreconcilable. It was our Lord's own prophecy, "If I be *lifted up from the earth* I will draw all men unto me;" "which," adds St. John, "he said, signifying what death"—what sort of death, namely by being lifted up upon a cross—"he should die." John xii. 32, 33. And yet the persecutors of Jesus, as you know, were Jews; and the Jews had not then the legal power of putting any one to death; (John xviii. 31;) and even if they had possessed it, crucifixion,—lifting up upon, and nailing to, a cross of wood—was not a Jewish mode of execution. And yet Jesus *was* put to death; and that by crucifixion! How? Through the malicious cunning of those Jews—who knowing their own inability to punish him capitally for what they deemed his offences against the ecclesiastical law—the *Church*; accused him to the Roman Governor of offences against the *State*, and delivered him over to Pontius Pilate as a prisoner of the *State*, and prevailed by clamour on that unjust Judge to inflict on him the punishment assigned to offenders against the *State*—the Roman punishment for rebellion against the Roman authority—which was crucifixion. And thus the innocent Jesus, according to his own prediction, (so strange an one that his Apostles could not understand one word of it!) was "delivered over to *the Gentiles*, to be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on;" (Luke xviii. 32) and to die, according to the manner of the Gentiles! So wondrously does

God “ declare the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure !” Isa. xlv. 10.

But next, as to the *Consequences* of the crucifixion of Christ ;—they are declared in the Creed to be such, to the full extent, as those which ordinarily attend the true, real, finished death of a mortal man, “ He was dead—was buried—descended into hell.” That when he hung upon the Cross he became truly “ *dead*,” you have the testimony of the eye-witness St. John, who tells us that “ when the soldiers,” who were commissioned to dispatch the criminals, should there be found any life still lingering in them, and to put an end to their sufferings, “ came to Jesus, and saw that he *was dead already*, they brake not his legs ” (as they had done with the thieves which were crucified with him) “ but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true, and he knoweth that he saith true, that you might believe.” John xix. 33, 34. That he was “ *buried*,” you have the testimony of all the Evangelists, and of the women who both embalmed the lifeless corpse, and also “ followed after and beheld the sepulchre, and *how his body was laid*.” Luke xxiii. 53. And that he “ *descended into hell*,” is added to make assurance doubly sure ; to commemorate the entire separation of the soul from the body ; and its passage onward into the region of departed spirits ; even as David had predicted when he said “ Thou wilt not leave my soul *in hell*.” Ps. xvi. 10. Acts ii. 27, 31. For I need not tell you that by the word “ hell ” in that passage, and therefore in the clause of our Creed *for which that passage is the warrant*, is meant, not the place of torment, but *the unseen world*, according to the primary

meaning of the Saxon word “helan,” that which is covered over,—is concealed—is unseen.*

Such then is the Historical Certainty of that Great Fact, the Death of Christ—“he was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell.” We pass on now to the DOCTRINAL MEANING of that death—the truth which is symbolized by that fact—its all-important significance with reference to our souls.

Now this doctrinal meaning is no less than what the Nicene Creed² commemorates when it says “He was crucified also *for us* ;”—and the Athanasian Creed when it declares “He suffered *for our salvation* ;”—and the Second Article of our Church when it adds, “he truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, *to reconcile the Father to us, and to be a sacrifice for sin* ;”—and, surer than all, the “most certain warrant” of all, what the inspired Apostle teaches us when he says to the Corinthians, “I delivered unto you, *first of all*, that which I also received, how that Christ *died for our sins*, according to the Scriptures ;” (1 Cor. xv. 3)—nay, and what the Lord himself, before that death, so plainly announced to his disciples ; “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to *give his life a ransom for many* ;” (Matt. xx. 28)—yea, and what he has commanded to be kept continually be-

* We find this primary meaning, from the same Saxon root, lingering in our common verb “to heal,” i. e. to *cover over* a wound, to cicatrize: as when we say “The wound *heals* favourably.” (“The last stage of healing, or skinning over, is called cicatrization.” Sharp’s Surgery.)

The very phrases used of our Lord’s resurrection imply his real and complete departure from this life—his both dying, and being buried, and going down into the region of departed spirits. He is said to have risen, not simply from *death*, (or what might have appeared so) but “from among the dead:” ἐκ νεκρῶν, 1 Cor. xv. 12, and ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν (Mat. xxvii. 7); and to have been “brought again from among the dead,” (ἐκ νεκρῶν) Heb. xiii. 20.

fore our faith, by a commemorative ordinance, to the end of time ;—" This is my body *which is given for you.*" " This is my blood of the new testament which is *shed for many, for the remission of sins.*" Luke xxii. 19. Matt. xxvi. 28. The *Fact* of Christ's death, what would it be to us more than that of any other martyr for truth and holiness, were it not for the *doctrine involved* in that death? The dignity of the sufferer we might admire ; his agonies we might sympathise with ; his fidelity to conscience we might extol, and perhaps strive to imitate ; but what is all this compared to those results in connexion with which the Scriptures set this fact before us? Why should we find the preaching of that death made the specific, characteristic topic of Christianity?—why should we be taught to look continually to that death as the very ground of all our peace and hope?—why should we have been enjoined, by the sufferer himself, to keep up a perpetual memorial of that death till his coming again?—were it not for the *doctrine* which by this fact is symbolized, the truth which is included in it ; that " Christ died *for our sins*" (1 Cor. xv. 3)—that " he gave himself *a ransom* for all." (1 Tim. ii. 6)—that " we are sanctified," *i. e.* made acceptable to God, " through the *offering of the body of Jesus Christ*, once for all?" Heb. x. 10.

It is then, of Christ's death as a *Sacrifice for sin*—an expiatory offering for your manifold transgressions of God's law, that you are called on to remind yourself, every time you say the Creed ;—a Sacrifice, like those Mosaic offerings with which it is compared, by which your *Justification*, or *Reconciliation to the Father* is effected—is testified—is brought to bear upon your heart and life !

For this, you will remember, was the object for which God graciously appointed those sacrifices of the law of Moses, with which the death of Jesus is so frequently, (and more especially in the ninth and tenth chapters of the Epistle to the

Hebrews) compared. Read, and meditate upon, the injunctions concerning those expiatory rites, in the fourth chapter of the book of Leviticus. See who they are intended for; what they are appointed to be a sign of to them; and what was the efficacy of them as regarded the relation of the offerer to the Lord his God. And you will then be able to enter into the meaning and importance of Christ's death as thus a sacrifice for sins.

You learn there, that when "any soul among the children of Israel had sinned against any of the commandments of the Lord, concerning things which ought not to be done, and had done against them," — was he an anointed Priest, or an authoritative Elder—or one of the common people,—then, "when his sin which he had sinned came to his knowledge," when he became conscious of the guilt that he had contracted before the Holy One, he was to bring his offering to the Lord, for a sin-offering; and was to lay his hand upon the head of the offering, and slay it for a sin-offering; and the officiating priest was to take of the blood of this sin-offering, and put it upon the horns of the altar, and sprinkle it seven times before the Lord, and thus he should "*make an atonement* for his sin that he had committed, and *it should be forgiven him.*" In which last sentence you learn that the object of the whole transaction was *the Reconciliation of the offender to his God*—the *justifying* him, or restoring him to righteousness in the sight of the Lord—the testifying, applying, and bringing home to his fearful conscience the great truth that God is merciful and gracious, long-suffering and of great goodness, not willing the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and *live*; that so, having come up before God as a self-condemned transgressor of his laws, he might go away again assured that his guilt was done away, *his sin forgiven him.*

Throw yourself back then, for a moment, into the mind of this poor Jewish transgressor. Conceive the horror with which he would discover that he had sinned against the holy, just, severe, inflexible, threatening, law of God, when "his sin which he had sinned came to his knowledge;" when his conscience became awakened to it; when, being reminded of the requirements of the law, their bearing on his own particular conduct became clear, and there came forth from them, straight into his heart, that not to be mistaken, not to be eluded, voice of solemn accusation, Thou art the man! He knows the guilt he has contracted. He knows the penalty denounced. But, blessed be God, he knows also the remedy provided! He hastens to procure the appointed sacrifice, the choicest of his flock or of his herd. He brings it, trembling, into the sacred courts of the temple, before the holy altar of the Lord. He lays his hand upon the victim; transfers, by this significant action, his own guilt on the head of that which stands before God as his representative and substitute; and waits in anxious expectation for the sign of its acceptance in his name.

And what if you, too, are a transgressor, like that son of Abraham? Has your sin come to your knowledge? Are you awake to the offences that you have been guilty of against the holy law of God? Do you feel that you indeed mean what you say when you confess before the throne of the Most High, "I have erred and strayed from thy ways like a lost sheep. I have followed too much the devices and desires of my own heart. I have *offended against thy holy laws?*" Then, let me ask you, Where is your sacrifice? Where is your warrant to hope for pardon? How shall you come before the Lord, and bow yourself before the Most High God? What shall you interpose between you and his holiness? By what symbol shall you get assured that all the punishment

which you deserve—(you *feel* that you deserve; you *acknowledge* that you deserve)—shall be averted from your head? O there is but one answer to these questions! And that answer is given us in *the death of Christ*. *Just what that appointed sacrifice was to the penitent Jew, just that, is THE DEATH OF CHRIST to you.* “He bore our sins in his own body on the tree.” Him, you may beseechingly present, as your appointed victim, substitute, representative, before the presence of God. On His head you may lay your hands—on Him transfer your guilt—and, with an earnest faith in God’s own promise, expect that he will be accepted in your stead!

But now, go back again to that Jewish penitent. See him prostrate before the sacrifice which he has offered. Observe how his quick eye glances on the doings of the priest in his behalf. He sees him take the sacrifice. He dips his finger in its blood. He puts of that blood upon the altar. He takes of it, and sprinkles before the vail of the sanctuary, before the Lord. And by that token the gazing, watching, penitent *knows that he is accepted!* that the way for his return to worship before that sanctuary is *cleansed for him!* that nothing any longer separates between him and his God! that he is “*purged with blood!*”

Now, Christian penitent, here again is *truth for you*. *What that significant action was to the Jew, that is the VIRTUE of Christ’s death to you.* You have the Apostle’s warrant for this. “Christ, being come, an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and of calves, but *by his own blood, entered in once into the holy place*, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the

flesh ; how much more shall *the blood of Christ*, who through the eternal Spirit *offered himself* without spot to God, *purge your conscience* from dead works to serve the living God ?” Heb. ix. 11—14.

And what then is the consequence of this testimony of the Reconciliation effected for us by the death of Christ ? Observe once more that Jewish penitent. He came up to the temple dismayed, cast down, and like the humble publican in the parable, “ not daring to lift up his eyes to heaven, but beating on his breast and crying, God be merciful to me a sinner !” But with the energy of a perishing man he seizes on the method of reconciliation which God holds out to him ; with the kindling eye of hope he watches the blood of his sacrifice being sprinkled before the mercy seat ; and *now !* the *object* of the expiatory rite—the *meaning* of the symbol—the blessed *truth* which it proclaims and seals to him—shine out before his mind ; made visible and vivid by the *facts* which God has appointed to assist his faith ; and he embraces them, reposes on them, rejoices in them, becomes assured that even as God has said, so is it true ! “ The priest shall *make an atonement for his sin, and it shall be forgiven him !*” Now, therefore, does the heavy burthen of guilt fall off from him. Now, does he see his uncleanness removed—his reconciliation with the Holy One proclaimed—his right to join with the people of God, and worship in the temple of God, and chant his praises before the presence of God, secured to him. Now, in a word, he is “ *justified !*” He is counted righteous before God ! He is accepted ! And he goes down to his house, with beaming countenance, and a light step, and a head erect in musing adoration, enquiring from his inmost soul, What shall I render to the Lord for all the benefits that he hath done unto me !

And nothing less than this—yea this to an extent, and with

a fulness, of which that legal justification, after all, was but an imperfect type,—is the state of mind which you are authorized to rise into, when you look on Jesus as *your Sacrifice, crucified for you !* *What that assurance of the efficacy of that sin-offering was to the Jewish penitent, that is your BELIEF of the virtue of Christ's death, to you.* “ He was made sin for you that you might be made the righteousness of God,” entirely righteous before God, “ in Him.” 2 Cor. v, 21. And “ being justified by faith you have peace with God through Jesus Christ your Lord ; by whom also you *have access by faith* into this grace wherein you stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” Rom. v. 1, 2. “ Having therefore, boldness to enter into the holiest *by the blood of Jesus*, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh ; and having an high priest over the house of God ; you may draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having your heart sprinkled from an evil conscience ;” and “ the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleansing you from all sin !” Heb. x. 19—21. 1 John i. 7.

Is then this the practical result, with you, my reader, of this precious doctrine symbolized by that great fact ? Are you thus profiting by what you are in the habit of confessing ? O take care that you look to nothing else for your acceptance before God. And take care, equally, that, looking to the death of Christ, you do not, by a want of thorough repentance, or of simple trust, or of personal appropriation, defraud your conscience of the full tranquillity which God has provided for by the sacrifice of his Son. Else will you “ frustrate the grace of God : for if righteousness come by the law, then *Christ is dead in vain !*” Gal. ii. 21.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

It is a touching circumstance that of all the many particulars of our Lord's history in the flesh, his sufferings only, his ignominious death, are recorded in the Creed. All the gracious things he said—all the mighty things he did—all the manifestations of his divine wisdom and divine power—these are passed over without notice, to come to the commemoration of his mournful end: "He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell."

But hereby does the Creed best intimate that great Christian truth, that just these very sufferings, this atoning death, formed the one great end for which our Lord was born into this world as man; which everything else was made to tend towards, and introduce; and by which, far more than by anything else, the work of our redemption was accomplished. "He took on him flesh and blood, in order that *through death* he might destroy him that had the power of death, and *deliver* them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage." Heb. ii. 14, 15.

Besides, this final agony, as it was the end for which he came into this world, was at the same time the indispensable means to a yet further end, beyond this world, his glorification with the Father. As surely as it had been predicted that the Christ should ascend the throne of universal empire, so surely had it been declared that the steps up to that throne should be marked with blood—that through previous suffering he should mount up to his glory, and then first when he should have

“given his soul an offering for sin,” should he “see his seed, and prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand.” Isa. liii. 10, 11. Equally as the Incarnation of Christ is commemorated as one great Article of our belief, because it was needful to his Death, so also is that Death commemorated, not only for its own intrinsic importance, but also as being necessary to his Resurrection, and its attendant glory.

To the great Fact, then, of THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST we now address ourselves. For we are to meditate on that clause of our Creed, “THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD.”

Where we shall have to notice, first, *The historical Certainty* of the Fact here commemorated; then, secondly, its *practical Significancy*.

SECTION I.

THE CERTAINTY OF THE RESURRECTION.

The Resurrection of Christ! Consider seriously, how stupendous a fact we are about to enter on. Nothing less than this: that He who was most certainly crucified, dead, buried; and who passed onward, by the thorough separation of soul and body, into the region of departed, disembodied spirits;—he, this same being, did, upon the third day after his crucifixion *rise again from among the dead*; return into this present world, re-animate the body which had been extended on the cross, and step forth, in the fulness and integrity of breathing, animal, life, among his terrified adversaries, and his astonished friends.

I need not transcribe the details of this amazing fact, as they are given by the Evangelists. It is one result of the

wise regulations of our Church, in bringing these things before you in annual festivals, that you know them well. Jesus, you know, was crucified upon the Friday; lay in the grave all Saturday; and on the Sunday, early in the morning, stepped forth from the tomb, alive! Which period of time is indicated in our Creed by the expression "the third day;" the phrase being taken from St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 4, and St. Matthew, ch. xvi. 21; to which another mode of speaking employed by the same Evangelist elsewhere, (xxvii. 62) "after three days," is equivalent. For according to the ancient mode of computation, in any given period the first and last days, or any the smallest portion of them, are included in the reckoning. For example: when the Jewish law prescribes that a child shall be circumcised "when eight days are accomplished" from its birth; the day of the birth and the day of the circumcision are both reckoned in; leaving but six entire days between the two events.* So again: when Joseph and Mary lost the young child Jesus, on their return from Jerusalem; they went one day's journey homeward; they spent the next day in returning to the city; and when, on the morning of the third, they discovered him, St. Luke describes the period of time which had elapsed by saying "*After three days* they found him in the Temple." Luke ii. 46. And you have the same mode of computation still existing, in the medical term, "*a tertian,*" or *third-day* ague; which reckons in the day on which the first paroxysm occurs and the day on which the second fit takes place, leaving an interval of only one entire day between them. In this way, therefore, "Jesus rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." 1 Cor. xv. 4.

* The injunction in Levit. xii. 3, is "In the *eighth day* the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised." The fulfilment of it, in the case of our Lord, is thus narrated by St. Luke, ii. 21, "When *eight days* were accomplished for the circumcision of the child, his name was called Jesus."

But how, you will ask—(for just in proportion to the importance of a fact, it is but proper, it is our duty, to insist on satisfactory evidence for that fact)—how do we know this?

The answer to which question rests upon the general evidence, which you may read in so many books, at so much length, for the *general credibility* of the sacred writers; who, from their own personal knowledge, their seeing and hearing for themselves, have recorded all the circumstances of the history of our blessed Lord. The Creed contents itself with simply stating what they have delivered to us. For its object is not to *prove*, but only to *commemorate*, the truths and facts of Christianity; which truths and facts are taken for certain and indubitable on the authority of the record in which they are preserved to us.

Yet, seeing that this great fact of the Resurrection is the very corner stone of the whole edifice of our faith; and is appealed to by the Apostles, in their sermons and letters, as the proof and warrant for every other; it would be well for us frequently to remind ourselves of the strong, substantial, deep foundations on which it rests. How the original witnesses of it had the fullest opportunity for knowing the truth concerning it. How there was everything in their character to assure us that they would state that truth and nothing else. How manifold were the circumstances to prevent them from being mistaken as to that truth. And how striking are the collateral proofs, which show, independently of their declarations, the certainty of that truth.

Observe then, in the first place, How the original witnesses of the Resurrection of Christ *had the fullest opportunity for knowing the truth concerning it*. For, who were these persons, who proclaimed this fact so boldly to such crowds of their countrymen, enemies as well as friends? Always remember

they were those who *personally knew* Jesus; had been the companions of Jesus; saw with their own eyes the same Lord whom they had laid in the tomb restored to them; and heard with their own ears his well-known voice conversing with them just as he had done before. We cannot sufficiently value this testimony *at first hand*. Most people think it a great thing to get testimony at second hand. There are very few facts that we can get at, otherwise than at third, and fourth, and fifth hand. And yet we never hesitate to receive such, even when much depends on them. Whereas the Resurrection of Jesus is declared to us by those who lived at the very time, in the very place, with him of whom they testify. Matthew, who is one of the witnesses, was one of his chosen Apostles. John, who is another, was besides this his bosom friend. And what do they tell us concerning him? That they *heard* from somebody that he had seen the Lord pass along, in his manner as he lived? or from another that he had actually accosted him? or from another that, like John and Andrew, at the first, he had “followed him and seen where he dwelt, and abode with him?” Nay: all this would be much: but this is nothing to their actual testimony. These men themselves who wrote these gospels, *themselves saw* their well-known, their beloved Master; themselves touched him, sat at table with him, ate with him, conversed with him; and, in a word, “to them he showed himself alive, after he was risen from the dead, *by many infallible proofs.*” Acts i. 3.

But then, consider in the second place, How there was everything *in the character of these witnesses* to assure us that they would state that truth, and nothing but that truth, which they had such full opportunity of knowing. I scarcely like to begin by reminding you that they could not but *wish to state it*—that they were honest men, and not impostors. For to and

one who has *read his Bible*, and become familiar with the sayings and doings of the first Teachers of Christianity, there is such a firm, deep, ineffaceable impression formed upon his mind, of their simplicity—integrity—straight-forwardness,—that the very thought, even for the sake of argument, of supposing it possible for a moment that they were acting a part, is painful and revolting, not merely to the reverence and love which he has, by this familiarity, contracted for them, but to every feeling of consistency and common sense. He could as soon admit suspicion concerning his father, or his mother, or the wife of his bosom. He feels that he could stake his very existence on their honesty and truth.

But nevertheless, do just look at their *simplicity of character*. They were not learned men, polished men, men of business, whose modes of thinking and acting were formed amidst the subtleties of the schools, or the chicanery of the world; and who thus might possibly contract a tendency to exaggerate, to colour, to modify, to suppress, to put the best face on a matter, if not to invent. They were just the reverse of all this. Most of them fishermen, sailors on the rough and boisterous deep, whose perfect transparency of character is to all eyes so manifest, that the very epithet we most commonly use for such men is “an *honest tar*.”

Nor is their rough *straight-forwardness*, without a thought of consequences, and with no attempt to *manage* matters, less conspicuous. Look at all they write concerning their Master, and their Master's enemies, and themselves. They make no scruple of telling how he was abused, and mocked at, and despised. They hide not from us how his adversaries were those whom every Jew esteemed the wisest, and most sanctified, and most powerful and reverend of men; nay that in his own city, and among his own family, and from his own brethren, he experienced unbelief, and taunt, and opposition.

And as for themselves; they let you into the secret of their mutual jealousies and rivalries; of how they disputed who should be the greatest; of how some of them called for fire from heaven to consume their adversaries; of how another first took his Lord to task for speaking of humiliation, and then afterwards, when that humiliation came, denied him with an oath; of how they all of them were reproached by their Master for their dulness of comprehension, and their lack of faith; yea and all of them, at last, forsook him and fled! And are these the men to make up a story, either for their own, or for their Master's reputation? Are these such as would readily catch at a delusion? Had they the trickiness to try their hand at a falsehood? Or had they the cleverness to succeed in it, if they could have tried?

Nay, more than this. You must not overlook, in considering their character, their *vehemence* — their oriental, Jewish vehemence; which of itself, so far from leading them to make up something to save their Master's credit, would rather have impelled them, in the outburst of their indignation at being disappointed and deceived, to be the first to proclaim to all the world what a false Messiah had palmed himself upon them. As hasty as they are to follow him when things go well, so hasty are they to desert and to deny him, when a change takes place. You see signs of this temper, in their history, not a few. When Jesus was first taken prisoner and they saw him make no demonstration of his power against his enemies, where is their fidelity? where their effort to bolster up his cause? "They all forsook him and fled!" And when one of them, with some lingering affection, crept back again to see how matters were going on; what disposition does he show to make the best of things, and stand up for his friend? Why! the mere curiosity of a servant girl makes him steal out into the porch! And when he is again attacked, he makes no

scruple of at once protesting, even with an oath, I do not know the man! And how felt the disciples going to Emmaus, when the death of Christ at last had taken place, and all seemed lost? Were they occupied in contriving some scheme to piece together again their shattered cause? Had they that recollection of his own predictions, which the sharper memory of malice had kept up in the Pharisees; so as to be as full of foresight and activity to plan his removal from the tomb as the High-priest and the Elders had been to take care that he should not be removed? Nothing of the kind! They only vented their bitter sorrow, almost indignation, in that despairing complaint, "We trusted that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel!" Luke xxiv. 21.

Were such men, then, I ask, either *disposed* to tell you, or *capable* of telling you, concerning this grand fact of the Resurrection of Christ, anything but the plain and simple truth?

Add now, thirdly; *How manifold were the circumstances to prevent their being mistaken as to that truth*:—to render it as impossible that they should be *deceived themselves*, as that they should be willing to deceive others.

For consider, first, that *their state of mind was altogether against the expectation of such an event*. It was not as if they had got possessed with the notion that their Lord would rise again, and, therefore, were ready to catch at any appearances, or any rumours, which might square with their preconceived expectations. So far from this, that though Jesus had repeatedly told them he would rise again, they had not the slightest conception of what he meant. A dying Messiah they could not believe. And, therefore, a rising one they could form no notion of. And consequently, while the more shrewd Pharisees were all on the alert; expecting and providing against an attempt on the part of the disciples to realize their

Master's prophecy, and steal his body from the tomb ; those disciples themselves, so far from any such thought, were utterly thunderstruck at the news of his *actual removal*. When the women first told them he was gone, "their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." Luke xxiv. 11. When Jesus actually came and stood in the midst of them, "they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit." Luke xxiv. 37. And even when he spoke to them, and called on them to handle him and see, they yet "believed not, for joy, and wondered !" Luke xxiv. 41. So that, so far from ready credulity ; or enthusiastic self-deception ; or a greediness to believe what they were longing to find true ; one cannot read the narratives which they have penned about their several interviews with their Lord, without being amazed, almost indignant, that they should have so long resisted such repeated proofs ; and been such "fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken !" Luke xxiv. 25.

Nor, further, if there had been, in any of them, this predisposition, from affection, or zeal, or ambition, to believe what was for them so glorious a fact, if true, was *the evidence for that fact left to be furnished by themselves alone*. One of the most striking proofs, (because a totally undesigned one) is the testimony of *their very adversaries*, to this fact. The very story which the Pharisees circulated, and which the Jews believed, to *account for* our Lord's removal from the tomb, contains within itself the proclamation—is based upon the full, though certainly the most unconscious admission—that *such a fact had actually taken place*. For if Jesus had *not* left the tomb, why invent a story to account for *how* he left it ? And yet the very same men who got a guard of soldiers from Pilate, and "made the sepulchre sure, setting a watch," lest "his disciples should steal him away, and say unto the people

He is risen from the dead ;” these very same men receive a testimony, (which testimony they evidently believe, and have no doubt whatever of its truth) from *the very guards* whom they themselves had set over the sepulchre, *that he is gone !* “Some of the watch came into the city and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.” Matt. xxviii. 11. And then those Rulers, on *the strength of this fact* thus reported to them by their own agents—because of this fact—admitting this fact—and taking counsel in full and earnest conclave on this fact—“give large money to the soldiers, saying, Say ye, his disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept; and if this come to the governor’s ears, we will persuade him, and secure you !” Matt. xxviii. 13, 14. And thus, by taking all this pains to spread abroad *an explanation* of the thing, they furnish us, from their own ex-parte, independent, statement, on the testimony of their own soldiers, a full proof that THE THING ITSELF HAD TAKEN PLACE. The tomb was empty ! The Lord was gone ! Just as those same men, when they accused Jesus of casting out devils through Beelzebub, did, by that very accusation, that malignant effort to *account* for the fact, furnish to us their own independent, reluctant testimony to that fact—that *such miracles Jesus certainly did perform*. They attempt not to deny *the cures* : these were staring them in the face. But they offer a calumnious account of *the means* of cure. And in that very effort they give their evidence that *cures there were*. “Lord, thou dost make the wrath of man to praise thee, and the remainder thereof thou dost restrain !”

Besides ;—not merely to the *personal friends* of Jesus,—and not merely to his *enemies*,—was the fact of his resurrection made thus plain ; but also to a large number of his *general disciples*, to whom at several times, in several places, at several intervals, he “showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs.” Acts i. 3. Look at St. Paul’s

enumeration of such proofs, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians (xv. 5—8) “He was seen of Cephas; then, of the twelve; after that he was seen of *above five hundred brethren* at once; of *whom the greater part remain unto this present.*” What a natural touch is that! How it glows with conscious honesty and truth! As if the Apostle had said—“They are still within your reach; you may go and ask them, or any one of them; you can cross-question them; they will corroborate, from the evidence of their own eye-sight, what I am now delivering to you!” O how fully authorized are we—yea how solemnly bound, by our allegiance to truth—when we run over, however hastily, all these heaped-up proofs, to acknowledge, (in the words of St. Luke,) “the *certainty* of those things wherein we have been instructed; and which were *most surely believed* among the earliest Christians, even as they delivered them unto them, which from the beginning were *eye-witnesses* and ministers of the word!” Luke i. 1—4. Yea, how triumphantly may we point to the bold assertion of St. Peter, “We have not followed *cunningly devised fables*, when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were *eye-witnesses of his majesty!*” 2 Peter i. 16.

And yet, there is still another mode of proof of this great event, the Resurrection of Christ, which goes beyond the testimony even of professed eye-witnesses, because it is made up by *striking collateral incidents, which show, independently of all direct assertion, that such a fact MUST have occurred.*

This deserves our sustained consideration. It is an argument from effects to their cause; from manifest consequents, to an adequate antecedent. Look then at the *consequents* following on the asserted Fact of the Resurrection of Jesus, as you see them manifested among all classes of the Jewish population.

Begin with the *enemies* of Jesus. You will find a manifest *change of position*, in relation to him, which can be accounted for only by his triumphant Resurrection. The class of men to whom he was most zealously opposed during his life-time, and by whose hatred he was brought to the cross, were the Pharisees: while the Sadducees regarded him chiefly with a calm contempt, as an enthusiast, and contented themselves with opposing speculative cavils to his announcement of the kingdom of heaven, and of everlasting life. Yet the very earliest records of the Acts of the Apostles show that some remarkable event must have occurred, to place the character of Jesus in a different relation towards both these sects. For you find that the Sadducees have become the active opponents of his followers; while the Pharisees not only are sometimes ready to defend them, but actually yield many converts, from their ranks, to Christ. "As they spake unto the people" says St. Luke, Acts iv. 1, "the priests and the captain of the temple, *and the Sadducees*, came upon them." And again, Acts v. 17, "The high priest rose up, and all they that were with him," (were *on his side*, of his way of thinking) "*which is the sect of the Sadducees*, and were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the Apostles, and put them in the common prison." While, on the other hand, "There stood up one in the council, a *Pharisee* named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people," and advised the assembly to "refrain from these men and let them alone," with the intimation that the work *might be of God* and that their enemies might be found "fighting even against God!" "And to him they agreed." Acts v. 34—40. And when Paul was brought before the council, (Acts xxiii. 1) while the high priest Ananias "commanded him to be smitten on the mouth," "*they that were of the Pharisees'* part arose and strove, saying We find no evil in this man!" And how

many converts passed over from this class of men to Christianity you may learn, not only from the declaration of St. Luke that "*a great company of the priests* were obedient to the faith;" Act vi. 7, but also from the painful fact that by such converts, bringing with them much of their former Judaical mode of thinking, the earliest churches were thrown into confusion; and the righteousness of the law was still insisted on, under the banners of him who came to be the end of the law, that righteousness might be reckoned simply to them that believe.

Now, such are the intimations of a great and unlooked-for change among the enemies of Jesus:—a transference of active opposition from one party to another:—those who had despised him now showing hate; those who had hated him now beginning to show reverence. Can this have taken place without an adequate cause? And what cause *is* adequate to such a marked and extensive result? *The Resurrection of Christ*, alone affords a solution of the problem; is actually referred to by those who record the phenomena, (not in the way of argument, but incidentally, as part of their mere dry historical information) as *the* solution by which those phenomena are explained.

For, it was the *meanness* of Jesus which disappointed the Pharisees. They were looking for a Messiah. They were willing for a season to rejoice in John's light when he proclaimed to them the Messiah as at hand. But they could discern no traces of what they looked for in the lowly Jesus. While the Sadducees, on the contrary, cared for no kingdom of God, believed no life to come. The same fact therefore, which, as proving the greatness of Jesus, would conciliate to him the minds of the Pharisees, would by contradicting their scepticism only exasperate the Sadducees. A continued life beyond the grave, this the one party looked for; and were willing to listen

when they heard it asserted concerning Jesus: this the other party denied; and began to persecute those who proclaimed aloud its proof in the resurrection of Christ. And thus they changed sides, in relation to our Lord. St. Luke, quite undesignedly *shows* us that they did so *from this very cause*. For why did the Sadducees come upon the Apostles? "Being grieved," he says, "that they taught the people and *preached through Jesus*," by their testimony concerning Jesus, by their reference to his rising again, "*the resurrection from the dead*." Acts iv. 2. And what was it that filled the high priest and the sect of the Sadducees with indignation, and made them lay hands on the Apostles? Acts v. 17. You learn the reason from verse 20, where you are told what those Apostles had been preaching; namely, "all the words of *this life*"—the doctrine of the *life to come* through Christ and his Resurrection. And what, on the other hand called forth the Pharisees in defence of Paul, and caused dissension between them and the Sadducees? Because "he cried out in the council, *of the hope and resurrection of the dead* I am called in question!" "For *the Sadducees* say that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit, but *the Pharisees* confess both." Acts xxiii. 6—8.

But go on, secondly, to the *general multitude* of the Jews. You find even among them, a wondrous change of feeling, after the resurrection of Jesus; which change you cannot trace to any other cause than their conviction of the certainty of that resurrection. When Jesus taught in person upon earth there were multitudes who sought from him relief for their bodily necessities—there were many who listened to his public teaching and wondered at his miracles,—but how few who joined themselves to him as his followers! We read of but little more than some few single instances. We read not that he

had so many avowed disciples,—as a body of men,—as John the Baptist, his forerunner. And we find him at last, with eleven persons only who cleaved to him as their Master, and a few women who ministered to his wants; while the crowds who had shouted so loudly Hosanna to the Son of David! a few days afterwards cried out as lustily, Crucify him!

Such was the state of things among the multitude *before* the death of Jesus. What was the state of things within two months afterwards? They who were insusceptible of the appeals of the divine Master, are roused up, as by magic, through the preaching of his feeble disciples. They who, before, at the utmost gave their admiration and applause; now give *themselves*. They who followed him for their personal advantage, now forsake all to join themselves to his church. They who came casually to listen to his words, now dedicate themselves publicly by a solemn rite, to the permanent confession of his name. On the day of Pentecost, the very first occasion of the Apostles' preaching, "there were added to the church about three thousand souls." Acts ii. 41. Nor did the work stop here. Men were not taken by surprise. When time was given for further enquiry; when the rising opposition of the Sadducees threatened danger to the newly formed society and all who should join it; when everything called on men to *be sure* of what they were about; and to act not from impulse but conviction—not from persuasion but from well-tried *evidence*; still, "many of them which heard the word believed, and the number of the men was about five thousand." Acts iv. 4.

Now, why was all this? Whence this change? Do not the very facts, as they stand in the Evangelist's narrative, assure us that there must have been some corresponding change in the position of Jesus—some great crisis in his history—which presented him before the public eye in a light

altogether different from that in which they had hitherto beheld him? And what was that change? What that crisis? Was it his ignominious death? Was it the sinking of that Sun of Righteousness below the horizon in all the lurid horror of a tempestuous eve? Nay, but it was just *what followed on that death!* It was the *rising again* of that same Sun in all the cloudless majesty of the morning of the Resurrection!—*this* is the fact to which the historic narrative refers us as the solution of these phenomena—this is the fact, which these very phenomena themselves, by their strangeness, by their utter unaccountableness on any other supposition, authenticate to us as an *acknowledged certainty*. It was when St. Peter had proclaimed, on the day of Pentecost, “This Jesus hath God *raised up*, whereof we all are witnesses,” that the multitude cried to him and to the rest of the Apostles, “Men and brethren what shall we do?” Acts ii. 32. It was “the word” of *Christ’s resurrection* which men, “when they had heard, *believed!*” Acts iv. 4. Comp. 33.

And now look, in the last place, at *the friends* of Jesus. What say you to the manifest change in temper, character, sentiments and doings, of the Apostles, after the death of Jesus, as compared with what they were before that death? In the first part of their history you behold them ignorant, timid, almost servile: in the second, full of wisdom; insight into Scripture truth; boldness in declaring it; and inspired with the temper of heroes, yea of Prophets of the Lord. *Could the mere death of their Master have wrought this difference?* that death, the very mention of which they had always shuddered at, as the death-blow of their hopes? If they who *believed* in Jesus *present*, were such mere children; would their necessary *unbelief* in Jesus *absent*, thus transform them into such determined men? Or, if when they were honest, but

mistaken, followers of a supposed Messiah, their characters were so feeble; was there any thing in their starting up to become dishonest partizans of one proved to them an impostor, to throw around those characters such a godlike dignity? Does brazen-fronted vice exhibit ordinarily such a noble bearing, as those men did upon the day of Pentecost, before the thousands who were cut by them to the heart?—or, afterwards, before the council, who could not terrify them even by brutal scourging? or, through all their subsequent history, when they purchased by their story, not honour, wealth, and power, but only insult, torture, death? And if then the *death* of Jesus could never have produced this change;—if, further, *an invention of the story of the Resurrection of Jesus* could never have produced this change;—what could produce it but the very fact to which they constantly, (and that too uncontradicted and unchallenged) themselves refer that change?—the fact which in our Creed we commemorate, that Christ indeed and truly “ROSE AGAIN THE THIRD DAY FROM THE DEAD?” I do say, that even if you had no record of the Resurrection of Christ, come down to you, and authenticated as it is; yet if you merely had *the history of his Apostles after their Master’s death*, standing out as it does in such amazing contrast with their history before his death, you would be driven to demand some adequate reason for that change—which adequate reason is furnished to you only in that Fact, which with such prodigality of proof is witnessed to you, that their Master *rose again the third day from the dead!*

SECTION II.

THE SIGNIFICANCY OF THE RESURRECTION.

IF you investigate all the many theories of education, you will convince yourself that there is no effectual method of instruction but the teaching by means of *facts* :—facts, not barren and unconnected, a mere heap of phenomena ; but facts, pregnant with a meaning, and bearing in their bosom their own interpretation—facts which, through the outward senses, speak to the inner soul ; and wake up there a wisdom that can never die.

And it is much to be noted that just this very method is that which God himself, the great Father of our race, has taken for the education of his human children. Throughout the whole circle of his relations to us, it is by *facts* that he teaches us every truth that bears upon our present and eternal welfare. In nature, it is by the Facts of the visible world, that his invisible being, “ even his eternal power and Godhead, are clearly seen.” Rom. i. 20. “ The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work ; they have no speech nor language, yet their lesson is gone out unto the ends of the earth.” Ps. xix. 1, 3. In providence, it is by the Facts of the social world, private, family, and national, that his fundamental laws of moral government are made known to us, so that “ whosoever is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.” Ps. cvii. 43. And even in Revelation—direct disclosure of God’s mind and will—it is by Facts made visible to the senses that the truths infused into the mind of God’s messengers are both illustrated and enforced. The Law of Moses was kept before the eyes of the people by

the Institutions of Moses—the tabernacle, the sacrifices, the festivals. The predictions of the prophets were made plain by the actions of the prophets ; the yoke which one carried, in the sight of the people—the staff and bands which another displayed—the various signs by which they drew attention to their message, and at the same time stamped the substance of that message on the very senses of mankind.

Now just such symbols of the truths which God would teach us by his Son, are the main events in the history of our blessed Lord : such speaking and didactic Facts ; awakening in the mind some spiritual idea ; and rousing in the heart some moral feelings, which regulate and influence our whole relation and behaviour towards the unseen God.

And among these symbols, not the least striking and significant, is the great Fact of the resurrection of Christ. We have seen, in the preceding Section, its Historical certainty ; let us now consider its PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCY.

And first, as regards *The Truth* of which it is the symbol ; the *Spiritual Idea*, of which the external fact is the sensible representative. This is no other than that of the believer's transference, through participation in Christ's life, into the presence of the Father, as a member of his family and partaker of his favour. As the Death of Christ is the symbol of our Pardon ; so the Resurrection of Christ is the symbol of our Acceptance. As, through faith in the one we are to look on ourselves as relieved, in Christ, from all guilt ; so through faith in the other we are to look on ourselves as admitted, in Christ, to all blessedness ; as no longer members of the commonwealth of earth, but citizens of heaven—no longer imprisoned in the flesh, but emancipated into the region of spirit in which Christ dwells. For, what says the Apostle Paul, to the Romans ? “ Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ

were baptized into his death—that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life?” that is, should act henceforth as if raised up into a new sphere of being—transferred into a new world. “For if we be dead with Christ we believe that we shall also live with him,”—that is, we trust, that having passed away with him from our lower state of being, we shall keep on living with him in a higher state—even in the enjoyment of God’s presence and favour—“for in that he died, he died unto sin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but *alive unto God*”—look on yourselves as persons who have risen from the domain of Satan into the domain of God,—“through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Rom. vi. 1—11. The whole passage, you will perceive the more you study it, is not an exhortation to *walk in accordance with* the Idea of one transferred into a heavenly state; (this follows after when it is said, as the practical conclusion from the spiritual premise, “Let not sin *therefore* reign in your mortal body”) but it is a call to the Christian to *make himself familiar with that Idea itself*, as it is symbolized to him by the Resurrection of Christ, and his connexion therewith;—to learn and believe that he is one, (and is to look upon himself habitually as one,) who through a vital union with his risen Lord, has been transferred into the heavenly regions, and domiciled, and domesticated (if I may use the phrase) with God himself. The *privilege* symbolized is the first thing—the *duty*, which out of our conviction of that privilege must flow, is the second. Consider how in Christ you are exalted to God; and then, and therefore, “yield yourselves to God, *as those that are alive from the dead*, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” Rom. vi. 13.

Whence you perceive how similar is this passage to that

other one of St. Paul, to the Ephesians, (which equally treats of *spiritual*, not of *moral*, resurrection) in which he reminds them that even by the same power which God exerted on Christ when he raised him from the dead, so, “you also hath he quickened;”—or spiritually and ideally raised up from the dead, transferred from the banishment and exile of an outcast whom God has counted as lost, and “dead” to him, on account of his transgressions, into the privileges of a citizen of heaven; for “God” (he continues) “who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, hath *quickened us together with Christ*, (by grace ye are saved) and hath *raised us up together* and made us *sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*.” Whereupon follows—not is *contained in*, the image, but *follows upon it*, as the practical application to duty, of the spiritual Idea of *privilege*—a similar admonition to that to the Romans, that they are to look upon themselves as thus “God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus,” raised up with him to a new and heavenly state of being, in a new region, “*in order to the doing of those good works*,” which correspond to such a state. Eph. ii. 1—10.

And so again, the same Idea is conveyed, by the same Apostle to the Colossians; when he reminds them that having been buried with Christ in baptism, they are “also *risen with him*, through the faith of the operation of God who raised him from the dead,” (through their faith in Christ’s Resurrection as a symbol of their own exaltation with him) and are “*quickened together with him*, having all their trespasses forgiven them;” and consequently are to look upon themselves as “dead to the rudiments of this world;” no longer living in this mere rudimental, imperfect state of being, here below; and to set their affection on those things which belong to the heavenly and perfect world into which they are raised with Christ; and in which their true life, even

as that of their ascended Master, is now hidden, with the unseen God. Whereupon follows, as before, the practical admonition which such an Idea includes in it, “Mortify, *therefore*, your members which are still on earth;” reduce what still is earthly in your nature into accordance with that spiritual Idea; complete in the flesh that death of the old man by which you may *realize in fact* what you are *constituted in idea*, “new creatures in Christ Jesus!”

Nor is this important view of the Christian’s connection with the death and resurrection of his Lord less earnestly pressed by the Apostle Peter; who in so many points exhibits to us the same mode of thinking, and even speaking, with St. Paul. For, in his first epistle, after he has reminded his readers (ch. iii. 18) how “Christ had once suffered for sins, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the Spirit,” (even as St. Paul does the Romans, ch. vi. 10;) and has moreover referred to their baptism as bearing in it a confession and symbol of the resurrection of Jesus Christ; (even as St. Paul does in the similar passage, Rom. vi. 3—5) he goes on to exhort them, (ch. iv. 1, 2) “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh,” (was “put to death,” so far as regards his earthly nature,—“all of him that could die”)—“arm yourselves likewise with the same mind,” be animated to contend with evil by the grand idea of your connexion with this death and subsequent resurrection;* “for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.” Death cuts off all communication and commerce with the evil which is in the world, and in a corporeal nature; and therefore in proportion

* Let the image, or idea (έννοια) of your participation in such a glorious transference from a world of sin to that of holiness, elevate, and strengthen you for your conflict with the flesh. “De mortificatione carnis hic potius agi quam de patientia sub cruce docent sequentia.”—GERHARD. “Think it ought to be thus, and seek that it may be thus, with you.”—ABP. LEIGHTON.

as you look upon yourselves *as if dead* with Christ, and risen with him into a new sphere of things, "you will live the rest of your time, even while yet remaining in the body, no longer to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." Compare the exactly similar train of thought and phraseology of Paul, Rom. vi. 5—7. "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin; for he that is dead is freed from sin." To have risen with Christ, is, *in idea*, to have escaped away from the burden and pollution of the flesh, and from the atmosphere of the world, and to have winged our way into the liberty and purity of the heavenly regions; there to live no longer to sense and earth, but *to the will of God*, in whose bright presence we stand.

Such then is the spiritual Idea, of which the Resurrection of Christ is a symbol. That great Fact shadows out our transference with him into a new life; *i. e.* a new state and sphere of being; our becoming colonized in a new world. Does this, peradventure, appear to any one a truth too ideal? approaching to the mystical? It is a truth not the less scriptural; nay, without our entering into which we cannot understand the very groundwork of the various epistles of St. Paul to the churches. For all those letters go on the supposition that he is addressing men who by their profession, as baptized into Christ, have agreed to recognize themselves, and the Christian brotherhood to which they belong, as no longer *of* the world, though *in* the world—as setting their regards on different objects, affected by different feelings, acting on different motives, breathing a different atmosphere, from those who, according to the Apostolic phrase, are still "in the flesh." This is the Idea which lies at the very root of Chris-

tianity and constitutes its life. Without it we may be moralists, but we shall never be spiritually minded. We may be more correct, more cautious, more refined *in degree* than the herd of worldlings; but we shall never be different from them in *kind*. We may be more *decent*, but we shall not be *other* men. For it is the Idea of Regeneration, or birth into a new sphere of being. It is that which was dimly felt, though alas not looked at in the clear dry light of reason and of truth, by the fervent men of olden times; who, disappointed and disgusted with the Christian world around them, and feeling that the Gospel of Jesus had missed of its significancy, went out, first as hermits, then as monks, to seek for themselves, amidst the solitudes of the wilderness, or in the secluded brotherhood of contemplative minds, if they could realize the transcendental truth of being citizens of heaven,—of leading an angelic life—of living only in the presence of God.* This, I say, is what they dimly felt that “rising again with Christ” required, though this, endeavouring after by the force of outward separations, mechanical rules, and corporeal austerities, they so grievously missed. For this can truly be made actual

* “Cum, post Apostolorum excessum tepescere cœpisset credentium multitudo,—hi, autem, quibus adhuc Apostolicus inerat fervor, memores illius pristinæ perfectionis, ea quæ ab Apostolis meminerant instituta,—exercere cœperunt.” CASSIAN (in Giesler, *Ch. Hist.*) Whence the monks were said “to live an apostolic life”—(Ἀποστολικὸν εἶον εἰοῦν). And their mode of living was called “the angelical life;” (ἀγγελικὴ διαγωγή· ὁ τῶν ἀγγέλων εἶος), and “the heavenly polity;” (τὰ οὐράνια πολιτεύματα), with manifest reference to Phil. iii. 20; “our conversation is in heaven.” (ἡμῶν τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει.) And the taking monastic vows is called by Jerome, with evident allusion to the ideal transference into a new world, of which baptism is the symbol, “the bathing oneself in, as it were, a second baptism of *intention*;” or in other words, the devoting ourselves to realize our baptismal character—“secundo quodammodo propositi se baptismo lavare.”—Ibid. And an old glossary interprets the title Μοναχὸς by ὁ μόνῳ ζῶν Θεῷ. RIDDLE, *Christ. Antiq.* 743.

in the Christian only in the same spiritual and moral way in which it was made actual in his Lord when he resided upon earth; by the regulation, namely, of the inward will—the soaring upward of the heavenly temper—the unworldliness of the practical principles of action—the rejection *from the mind and heart* of the devil's three grand tempters, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life—the realizing, in a word, our Saviour's parting prayer for his disciples—“ Now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me. I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst *keep them from the evil*. They are not of the world even as” (in like manner as, after the same idea)—“ I am not of the world !” John xvii. 11—14. O that from our own experience we may find that there is truly nothing mystical, but rather eminently practical, in this grand Idea of the Christian as *a man of another system*; who in his tastes, his views, his habits, his enjoyments, his hopes, is as different from those around him as light from darkness! “ If any man be in Christ he is *a new creature*; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new !” 2 Cor. v. 17.

But now let us look at the practical significancy of the Resurrection of Christ as regards the *moral influence* which the consideration of it brings to bear upon our faith, our energy, and our patience.

Observe its bearing on our *Faith*. How needful was this great Fact in order to establish our trust in God, and in the work of our salvation through his Son. All the facts of the Creed have indeed this bearing. They all furnish, as symbo-

lical representations of great leading truths, so also practical answers to pressing questions with regard to our salvation. Do we ask, in the first workings of an anxious sense of our delinquency and danger, How can I be saved? The very *Titles of Christ*, as given in our Creed, reply, By the work of one who is at once your Friend, your King, your Lord, your God; in short, *by a divine interposition!* And do you go on to enquire How can this divine interposition take place? The *Incarnation of Christ* declares to you, By God's own Son descending for you into your humanity! Or further, How can this divine interposition work towards the deliverance I need? The *Death of Christ* proclaims to you, By the substitution of this Son of God made Son of man, in your place and stead! And then, if with the trembling eagerness of one who catches a glimpse of rescue when all seemed ruin—of life when all seemed death—afraid to believe too hastily what, if true, is joy and triumph, you go on to inquire, But then, how shall I know this? What shall warrant to me this blessed hope? Who shall assure me that such a substitution of such a Divine Friend is according to God's will, and shall work for me God's end? Then comes the crowning Fact of the *Resurrection of Christ*, plainly showing you that God himself has honoured the sacrifice, has accepted the Victim, has proclaimed himself well pleased with the offering. As the Death of Christ is, in relation to the ancient sacrifices of the Jewish law; so is the Resurrection of Christ, in relation to the testimony which God gave, under that law, to his acceptance of those sacrifices. Turn to the ninth chapter of the book of Leviticus, 22—24, and you will find that when Aaron had offered a sin-offering for the people, then “there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering; which when the people saw they shouted and fell upon their faces.” Where, you see, it was not enough for God to have appointed

those sacrifices; to have called them by the name of sin-offerings, or propitiatory offerings; and thus to have intimated to the people that they were intended as means of their reconciliation with him; but over and above all this, he condescends to give them a practical manifestation, a *sensible proof*, that all had been done as he wished; that he was satisfied; that he “remembered all their offerings, and accepted their burnt sacrifice;”—“*which when all the people saw they shouted, and fell on their faces!*” And just similar is the case of Manoah (Judges vi. 21). When, by the command of the angel, he had offered his burnt-offering to the Lord, then “*the angel did wondrously, and Manoah and his wife looked on; for it came to pass when the flame went up towards heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on it and fell on their face to the ground.*” And so to Gideon—and to Elijah—and to Solomon—when they had made their respective sacrifices to the Lord, in each case there was given a *sign from heaven* in token of God’s acceptance of the offering, and to confirm their faith in him.

Even so, is the Resurrection of Christ *for the confirming of your faith towards God*. “He raised him from the dead” says Peter, “and gave him glory, *that your faith and hope might be in God.*” 1 Peter i. 21. “If Christ be not raised” says St. Paul “your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.” 1 Cor. xv. 17. “He was delivered for our offences, but he was raised again for our justification.” Rom. iv. 24. And would you then assure yourself that God lays nothing to the charge of his elect? that he has justified, and no one thenceforth may condemn? you may exclaim, in the triumphant language of the same Apostle, “It is Christ that died, *yea rather that is risen again*; who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us!” Rom. viii. 34.

And see then what a bearing this fact has, in the second place, on the Christian's *Energy*. In every case our energy will be as our faith. The vigour of our will will be as the vividness of our conviction. It is thus that faith works miracles. "Only believe," said Jesus, "and all things are possible to him that believeth." What then will be the energy of him who is well assured that he is trusting in, and serving, a *risen* Saviour? You see, by facts, what will be that energy; when you compare the temper of the Apostles before and after this glorious event; when you look at their behaviour on the day of Pentecost; and see those very men, to whom their Lord had formerly said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, how long shall I suffer you! standing up before the countless multitude, and with modest daring telling them that "This Jesus God hath raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ!"

And how does St. Paul endeavour to stimulate the languid energies of his disciple Timothy? Just by this very same topic. "God" he had said to him, "hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound, (or vigorous) mind;" and to stir up this spirit, and bring it into action, his main argument is this—"Remember, that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, *was raised from the dead*, according to my gospel. And it is a faithful saying, If we be dead with him *we shall also live with him*; if we suffer *we shall also reign with him*!" 2 Tim. ii. 8—11. O to be roused up to a life of active righteousness, by this inspiring topic! Would you have *lofty aspirations*, and desires which pierce the clouds? Meditate on your Saviour's Resurrection. "If ye be risen with Christ seek those things which are above!" Col. iii. 1. And would you have *heavenly tempers*, and habitual communion

with things unseen? Consider, again, your Saviour's Resurrection. "Our conversation" says St. Paul, "is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." Phil. iii. 20. And would you have *bold and determined purposes*? Look again, to your Saviour's Resurrection. "Yea doubtless" says the same Apostle, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him; that I may know him, and *the power of his Resurrection*, being made conformable even to his death; if by any means I might attain unto *the resurrection of the dead*!" Phil. iii. 8—11.

But see, once more, the bearing of this Fact, not only on our Faith, and Energy, but on our *Patience*—our persevering service of God in all obedience, through every obstacle, notwithstanding every temptation, even to the end. Christ's history is the type and pledge of what shall be the history of every one who is faithful to him. It may begin in humiliation;—it may go on through pain, and sorrow, and self-sacrifice;—but it shall be consummated *in triumph*! No one can follow Jesus along his path of suffering and self-denial, who shall not rise with Jesus to his throne of glory! "For, whom God did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be *conformed to the image of his Son*"—*i. e.* to the glorified condition to which he was raised up—"that he might be the first-born among many brethren"—that he might share his triumph with that whole family which he came to save; and might present himself before the Father, saying, Behold I, and the children whom thou hast given me! Here then is the patience of the saints. Hence we may be assured that all things are working together for good to those who love God. As surely as all the trials of Christ's earthly course—the temptations of the

devil, the taunts of the Pharisees, the weaknesses of the disciples, the changeableness of the multitude, the treachery of Judas, the injustice of Pilate, the cruelty of the High Priests, the agonies of Gethsemane, and the bitterness of Calvary—as surely as all these were but the appointed stepping-stones by which the Son of David was to mount up to his Father’s throne; so surely, with the Christian, will tribulation work patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, until, through similar trial—and similar perseverance—he mount up at last to a similar triumph. “If any man serve me,” says our great Forerunner, “let him follow me; and *where I am there shall also my servant be!*” John xii. 26. “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne!” Rev. iii. 21.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST.

IN going through the main facts of our Saviour's history, as they are commemorated in the Apostles' Creed, we have now considered his Incarnation—his Death—his Resurrection.

The next subject set before us is HIS EXALTATION. "HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN, AND SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, THE FATHER ALMIGHTY."

Now, THE FACT here commemorated will not require many words.

I would only remind you, first, that it *had been already distinctly predicted* by our blessed Lord, before his crucifixion. The Ascension of Christ was no unlooked-for, chance occurrence. It was part of that series of events which had been ordered beforehand, in the purposes of God, for our salvation. And therefore, he who came from God to work out that salvation, saw in advance, and foretold to his disciples, as his Resurrection from the dead, so also his passing onward, after that Resurrection, from earth to heaven—his return to God who sent him. So early as his conversation at Capernaum, recorded in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel, when men were marvelling at his declaration, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood ye have no life in you; Jesus, in order to show that his words must necessarily be interpreted, in a figurative sense, of feeding on the *doctrine* of

his flesh sacrificed for man, had said; "Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man *ascend up where he was before?*" John vi. 61, 62. And as the time of his departure drew near he consoled his troubled disciples with the clear assurance, "In my Father's house are many mansions. *I go to prepare a place for you.*" John xiv. 2. For which consummation of his work he pleads, in his parting prayer with his Apostles. "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now O Father, *glorify thou me with thine own self*, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." John xvii. 5. How touching are these aspirations of Jesus towards that heavenly home which he had left for ungrateful man! How eagerly, as he draws near the goal, his spirit yearns for rescue from this guilty sphere, to find its resting place in the bosom of the Father. "Now I am no more in the world! I come to Thee!"

But observe, next, how, as Jesus had predicted, things took place. The Fact of his Ascension *is witnessed to us by his followers*. It was not in secret that he left the earth. He did not steal away from those around him, leaving them to be convinced of no more than the fact *that he was gone!* His departure was not involved in the mystery which attended the removal of Moses, who "went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo—and Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there, in the land of Moab—but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." Deut. xxxiv. 1, 5, 6. But, in the presence of his Apostles,—not one nor two, but all the assembled company; before their eyes; exposed to their prolonged and steady observation; "when he had spoken these things," (says St. Luke) "*while they beheld*," while still their eyes were fixed upon him, so that there could be no mistake, "*he was taken up*, and a cloud received him out of their

sight." Acts i. 9. "So then" (says St. Mark), "*after the Lord had spoken unto them*, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." Mark xvi. 19.

Yet, even here, as in the miracle of the resurrection, the testimony of eye-witnesses is confirmed by that of *subsequent circumstances*—circumstances over which they could have no control—which they could not invent—which none can be mistaken about. The Ascension of Jesus into heaven, his sitting there on the right hand of God,—*i. e. his possession of his Father's power*, is manifested by the *gifts of the Holy Ghost, which he thence showered down*. To this confirmation of his personal testimony St. Peter makes appeal before the multitudes, on the day of Pentecost, who had run together to behold, and wonder at, these gifts. "This Jesus," he tells them, "God hath raised up. Therefore, being by the right hand of God" (or rather, *to the right hand of God*,*) "EXALTED, and having received of the Father, the promised Holy Ghost, HE hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear. For David is *not ascended into the heavens*, but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, *Sit thou on my right hand*, until I make thy foes thy footstool." Acts ii. 32—35. And so, again, both Peter and the other Apostles argue with the Council: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. *Him hath God exalted* with" (or rather *to*) "his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; *and so also is the Holy Ghost whom God hath given to them that obey him*." Acts v. 30—32. Thus you have the predictions of Jesus before the

* See v. 34: "Sit thou on my right hand." The words are $\tau\eta\ \delta\epsilon\ \xi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \delta\epsilon\iota\omicron\upsilon\ \epsilon\psi\omega\theta\epsilon\iota\varsigma$. And "after words of sending, conducting, going and coming, the dative is often used instead of $\pi\rho\sigma$ or $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$." WINER: Gr. des N. T. Sprachidioms. See also MATTHÆ, Gk. Gr. § 401, 3.

fact—the ocular evidence of the Apostles, who had been present during the fact—and the testimony of the Holy Ghost, after the fact;—all conspiring to prove to you, that “He ascended into heaven and sat on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty.”

Now then let us pass on, in the second place, to THE DOCTRINE of the Exaltation of Christ—what we are taught, in the inspired word, concerning *the Meaning of that Fact*; its place in the work of our salvation, and its bearing on our spiritual welfare.

To understand which, we must remind ourselves how the whole work of Christ’s interposition for the saving of the world is set forth in the Bible under the image of a *priestly mediation*. Just that whole office which God committed to Aaron and the Jewish priesthood, to be exercised for his people Israel; has been committed to the One Great Priest, of whom those, all, were only types; to be exercised for a guilty world. “We,” says the Apostle, “have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God.” Heb. iv. 14. But if you look into that office of the Jewish priesthood, and especially that highest and most solemn part of it which was executed by the high priest only, once a year, when he made atonement for the sins of the people, you will perceive that it consists of three distinct stages of mediation. There is, first, the *slaying of the sacrifice*, upon the altar. Levit. xvi. 11. There is secondly, the taking of the blood of that sacrifice and bringing it within the vail of the Holy of Holies, and *sprinkling it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat*. Levit xvi. 15. And then, thirdly, there is the coming forth again, from before the Lord into the presence of the people, and *blessing them in the name of the Lord*. Numb. vi. 23—26. Deut. xxi. 5.

Now, if you study the Epistle to the Hebrews, (especially the ninth chapter) you will find that just in these respects, and just in comparison with these three stages of the priestly mediation, is Jesus represented as having effected for the soul and conscience, what the Levitical priesthood accomplished only for the purifying of the flesh. First, he made for us a *sacrifice of propitiation*, when he gave himself upon the cross ; the functions of priest and victim being in him united ; that which was heavenly in him, and divine, slaying for us all that was capable of suffering and death. Then, secondly, he *passed on with the blood of his sacrifice into the holy of holies*, the presence of God, there to offer it before the mercy seat, the throne of the Most High ; when, being raised from the dead, he ascended up, through the clouds, into the heaven of heavens, “there to appear in the presence of God for us.” And, thirdly, we are taught by the Apostle to look for his fulfilment of the final function of the priestly office *when he shall come forth from the presence of the Father*, to lift up the light of his countenance on a waiting world, and to bless it in the name of the Lord. “Christ” says St. Paul, “was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that *look for him*,” (where there is a manifest allusion to the posture of mind of the people, looking out for the re-appearance of the High Priest from the Holy of Holies, to close all with the benediction from the Lord)—“to them who thus are looking for him, he shall *appear the second time*, without sin unto salvation :” not again as a victim, to bear our sins ; but as the Proclaimer of accepted and completed mediation to cheer into triumphant gladness a regenerated world.

It is then the Second of these functions—Christ’s living presence for us as our great High Priest before the mercy-seat,—which is fulfilled by His Ascension into heaven and sitting on the right hand of God. In the court of the temple,

as it were, upon this earth, and on the altar of the cross, he sacrificed himself, a victim for our sins. But then, he rose again from the dead, and passed on into the holy of holies, the inner shrine, there to sprinkle for us his blood, and plead our cause. See how expressly St. Paul states this, in Hebrews ix. 11—14: “Christ being come, an High Priest of good things to come,” (*i. e.* of blessings of which those Levitical ones were only anticipative,—good things which were to follow after them, as the reality, of which they were the promise,) “by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building” (passing, *i. e.* into the heavenly temple, of which that material one was but the type; and this too) “not with the blood of goats and calves,” (like those Levitical priests,) “but with his own blood; he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit” (*i. e.* in virtue of that divine nature through which, as St. Peter says, though put to death in flesh he was made alive again in spirit*)

* διὰ πνεύματος αἰωνίου in his eternal Spirit,—as possessing,—because endowed with—an eternal spirit. (Comp. Rom. ii. 27; where “by (διὰ) the letter and circumcision” is equivalent to “persons being in possession of the law, and circumcised.” Rom. iv. 11; “That he might be the father of all them that believe, *though not circumcised*” (δι’ ἀκροβυστίας, in a state of uncircumcision). 2 Cor. iii. 11; “For if that which was done away was glorious, (διὰ δόξης, possessed of glory) much more that which remaineth is glorious.” (ἐν δόξῃ where διὰ and ἐν are interchanged: even as διὰ πνεύματος, here, is equivalent to τῷ πνεύματι and ἐν ᾧ (sc. πνεύματι) in 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19). See Fritzche on Rom. ii. 27 “Διὰ *h. l.* conditionem, in quâ locatus aliquid facias, indicat; et idem valet σὲ τὸν διὰ γράμματος καὶ περιτομῆς quod σὲ τὸν τὸ γράμμα καὶ τὴν περιτομὴν ἔχοντα. Cf. Xen. Cyrop. 4. 6. 6. νυνὶ διάκειμαι ἔρημος ὢν καὶ διὰ πένθους τὸ γῆρας διάγων.) By virtue of that divine nature, which enabled him not only to offer up his body, for an instant, on the altar of the cross, but to

“offered *himself*, without spot, to God”—(presented his ascended person a pure and perfect offering before the mercy-seat in heaven,—how much more shall the sprinkling by such a Priest, of the blood of such a victim, in the heavenly sanctuary), “purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” “For Christ” the Apostle says again, v. 24, “is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are but the figures of the true, *but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.*”*

Here then is the great truth which the Article of our Creed

go on with the sacrifice into the presence of God (as the high priest took the blood of the victim into the Holy of Holies) and there present it continually as a *never-ceasing* offering to the Father. An animal might be once slain, and once offered : Christ by his never-dying nature is able to present himself eternally before the Father in our behalf. “This man, *because he continueth ever,*” (διὰ τὸ μένειν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα) hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them *to the uttermost*,” (or evermore εἰς τὸ παντελές) seeing he *ever liveth* to make intercession for them.” Heb. vii. 24, 25. “If any man sin, we have an Advocate, with the Father,” (who is in the presence of the Father, πρὸς τὸν πατέρα) “Jesus Christ the righteous ; and he is the propitiation for our sins.” 1 John ii. 1, 2. So Theophylact says, Οὐχ ἀρχιερεὺς τις προσενεγκε τὸν Χριστὸν ἀλλ’ αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν καὶ οὐ δια πυρός (not with an offering of fire, whose flame should “go up toward heaven from off the altar,” Judg. xiii. 20) ὥς οἱ δαμαλεις, ἀλλὰ δια πνεύματος αἰωνίου (with the offering of his eternal Spirit, going up itself toward heaven) ὥστε καὶ τὴν χάριν καὶ τὴν ἀπολυτρώσιν διαίωνιζειν. “No ministering priest offered up the Christ, but he himself offered up himself ; and that too not by destroying himself with fire, as the heifers are consumed ; but by ascending with his indestructible spirit, that he might thus by its eternity *eternize* the grace and the redemption which he has obtained for us.”

* Compare Heb. viii. 1. “We have such an High Priest *who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens ; a minister of the true tabernacle*” (i. e. the heavenly one which was the ideal and pattern of that earthly one of Moses, v. 5.) “which the Lord pitched, and not man.” And also ch. vii. 25. “He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him” (that use him for their mediating priest in their approaches to God) “seeing he *ever liveth*” (in the heavenly sanctuary) “to make intercession for them” before the face of God.

now before us, would remind us of. Christ as our Intercessor with God, before his throne in heaven—an Intercessor all gracious and compassionate—all-sufficient for our constantly recurring needs—all-powerful to afford us patronage and help.

How blessed is the view of the ascended Jesus as an Intercessor *all-gracious and compassionate* ! See how St. Paul insists on this. “Seeing that we have a great High Priest *that is passed into the heavens*, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For *we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities* ; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” Heb. iv. 14—16. How gracious is this condescension to our infirmities ! Our Intercessor, one with ourselves ; partaker of the same nature ; who has gone through the same trials ; who has fought the same fight ! “Every high priest on earth,” says the Apostle, “ordained for men, is *taken from among men*” (with all the sympathies, therefore, of his kind, about him) “who can *have compassion* on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.” Heb. v. 1, 2. And behold our Intercessor in heaven ! He likewise is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh ; —though divine yet also human ; though pure and spotless as regards all sin yet capable of compassionating sinners ; and bearing into the heaven of heavens the same pitying tenderness which prompted him to say on earth to the woman that had been a sinner, “Thy sins are forgiven thee !” and to the shrinking sufferer, who durst scarcely touch the hem of his garment, and “came trembling and falling down before him,” “Daughter be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole !” See therefore how you may bring, not only

your sorrows but your sins to this compassionate High Priest, to get them blotted out by his blood. We are too much inclined to approach God only in those moments when, in one sense, we are least in need of God. We draw near to him when the mind is clear, the heart devout; when, in a word, we are spiritually *well*: but we hide ourselves from him when we are dull, and heavy, and desponding; in a word, when we are spiritually *ill*; and therefore are most pressingly in need of help. We are like the self-loathing lepers who kept afar off; but we are not like them in crying out, even from our distance, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" But the great truth of Christ's Intercession is specially designed to meet this very state of mind; to encourage us to bring our very declensions, defilements, short-comings, to our compassionate Redeemer; and to plead with him against the very sin that cleaves to us, to ask from him the very holiness of which we are destitute.*

* "Wouldst thou have much power against sin, and much increase of holiness, let thine eye be much on Christ; set thine heart on him; let it dwell in him, and be still with him. When sin is like to prevail in any kind, go to him, *tell him of the insurrection of his enemies, and thy inability to resist*, and desire him to suppress them, and to help thee against them, that they may gain nothing by their stirring but some new wound. If thy heart begin to be taken with, and move towards sin, *lay it before him*; the beams of his love shall eat out that fire of these sinful lusts. Wouldst thou have thy pride, and passions, and love of the world, and self-love, killed; go sue for the virtue of his death," [and the power of his intercession] "and that shall do it; seek his Spirit, the spirit of meekness, and humility, and divine love. Look on him, and he shall draw thy heart heavenwards, and unite it to himself, and make it like himself. And is not this the thing that thou desirest?" ABP. LEIGHTON, on 1 Pet. iv. 1. "There is no standing out against sin without some firm ground to stand on: and this Faith alone supplies. By faith in the love of Christ the power of God becomes ours. When the soul is beleagured by enemies; weakness on the walls, treachery at the gates, and corruption in the citadel; then by faith she says—Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world, thou art my strength! *I look to thee for deliverance!* And thus she overcomes." COLERIDGE, *Aids to Reflection*, 305.

For, why does man need a priest at all? Because he feels that God is awfully holy, while himself is full of sin. Adam, in his innocence, needed no priest. The divine wisdom rejoiced in him, and he talked with God. But directly that he sinned, the voice of the Lord struck terror into him, and he hid himself from the face of the Lord amidst the trees of the garden. And thenceforth it is only the doctrine of a divine Intercessor, which can soothe the misgivings of the troubled conscience. "If any man sin," says the Apostle John, "we have an Advocate," an Intercessor, "with the Father," standing before his throne, in his immediate presence, "Jesus Christ, the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." 1 John ii. 1. Here then is the provision for *the daily infirmities of the believer*, even as the sacrifice on the cross is the provision for the *whole amount of past transgressions of the repenting convert*. It is not merely that Christ has died for us, for the remission of sins that are past; but he, moreover, *ever liveth for us*, to maintain, keep up, renew from hour to hour, as we need it, our acceptance, through each successive present. And if the anxious Christian realized this truth more, he would not so frequently dishonour his profession; and wound his soul; and cut the very sinews of a robust and vigorous obedience; by a mistrusting, querulous spirit; always fluctuating between hope and fear, the sense of pardon and the sense of guilt. Many a one who has looked much and often at Jesus *on the cross*, has not yet learned to look so steadily at Jesus *on the right hand of God*. The doctrine of Atonement has delivered him from ruin, but the doctrine of Intercession has not delivered him from wretchedness. And yet what a word that is, which the Apostle uses in connexion with this subject!—"Boldness!"* "Let us come *boldly* to the throne

* Μετὰ παρρησίας. See 2 Cor. vii. 4. "Great is my boldness of speech (παρρησία) towards you." John vii. 13. "No man spake openly (παρρησία)

of grace"—not in gloomy silence—not with faltering accents—not with a fearful keeping down and smothering of the manifold feelings of the tempted mind—but with the whole heart, in entire openness, pouring forth its various emotions; even as a child into the bosom of its parent; with the tear, indeed, bedewing its burning cheek, but with the beam of filial confidence sparkling in its uplifted eye. “Having therefore *boldness* to enter *into the holiest* by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail; and *having an high priest over the house of God*, let us draw near with a true heart, in *full assurance* of faith, having our hearts *sprinkled from an evil conscience!*” Heb. x. 19—22.

But let the believer look to his ascended Lord, in the second place, as an Intercessor *all-sufficient for his constantly recurring needs*. It is as setting before us an High Priest who does not offer for us, once and again, a sacrifice, and then leave us to ourselves; but who affords us the *continuous exercise of his mediation*, that the doctrine of the Exaltation of Christ, and his living in heaven, is so earnestly pressed upon us by St. Paul. “They truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to *continue*, by reason of death, but this man, *because he continueth ever*, hath an *unchangeable* priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them *to the uttermost*” (through each vicissitude of life on to the very end) “who come unto God by him; seeing he *ever liveth* to make intercession for them.” Heb. vii. 23—25. Christ, as your ever faithful, ever ready, friend,—always to be come at, always at

of him, *for fear of the Jews.*” Acts ii. 29. “Let me freely (*μετὰ παρρησίας*) speak unto you.” The Christian is encouraged to fulfil the exhortation of the Psalmist, (lxii. 8) “Trust in him *at all times*;—*pour out your hearts* before him. God is a refuge for us.”

hand to interpose for you, always carrying on your cause,—is the object set before you in this great Article of our Creed. Just *then*, when your inward necessities are most pressing, recollect the fulness which is laid up for you in Christ ; and go and ask and you shall have, and seek and you shall find, and knock and it shall be opened to you. “ When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and *received gifts for men.*” Eph. iv. 8. And just *then*, too, when things seem most to fail without you—when you are in the greatest straits and difficulties—then re-assure your fainting spirit by the thought—*Now* especially does HE step forth in my behalf ! Now does he renew his interposition ! Now I may leave all to his care ! So did St. Stephen, when, at the very crisis of his fate ; the triumph of his enemies ; the sinking of his mortal flesh ; he “ being full of the Holy Ghost *looked up stedfastly into heaven*, and saw the glory of God and *Jesus standing at the right hand of God.*” Acts vii. 55, 56. And so St. Paul would have every Christian to believe, amidst the rushing floods of trouble ; when he reminds us, “ Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, *who is even at the right hand of God*, who also *maketh intercession for us !* Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us !” Rom. viii. 34—37.

“ *More than conquerors through him that loved us !*” For, forget not, that this doctrine of an ascended Saviour assures to us, lastly, an Intercessor, *all-powerful to afford us patronage and help.* He is not merely ascended into heaven ; “ he sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty.” At *his*

right hand:—implying the honour put upon him; the power committed to him.*

For the right hand of the Sovereign is, as you know, the seat of highest *honour and influence*. “Bathsheba went unto King Solomon to speak to him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king’s mother, and *she sat on his right hand*. Then she said, I desire one petition of thee; and the king said unto her, Ask on, my mother, *for I will not say thee nay*.” 1 Kings ii. 19, 20. Even so Jesus, when he entered into heaven with his petition for us, sat down *on the right hand* of the Majesty on high, *who will not say him nay!*

Nor is such a figure less the image of *power*. “He is *gone into heaven*, and is at *the right hand of God*, angels and authorities and powers being *made subject unto him*.” 1 Peter iii. 22. “For this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down *on the right hand of God*, from henceforth expecting *till his enemies be made his footstool*.” Heb. x. 12, 13. And this is the doctrine of that long argument of St. Paul in

* For, to “sit at the right hand of a king” denotes the being raised, (1) to the *participation of his honour*; as was Bathsheba; 1 Kings ii. 19; and the Bride of Solomon; Ps. xlv. 9; and as the mother of James and John desired for her son, Matt. xx. 21. But (2) to the *participation of his power*, as is promised to the Messiah, Ps. cx. 1. “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I *make thine enemies thy footstool*. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion; *rule thou in the midst of thine enemies*;” and is declared at large of Jesus as that Messiah; Eph. i. 20, 21. “God raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, *far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion*.” So the superior gods are called by heathen writers the *συνεῖδες*, and *συνθεοὶ* with Jupiter; whence many Christian Fathers speak of Christ as *συνεῖδος* and *συνθεὸς τοῦ πατρὸς*. See SUICER, VOC. *συνθεῖ*. and KNAPP, *Opuscula*, i. 48—56.

which he shows that our High Priest was to be not after the order of Aaron but of *Melchizedek*; that is, of one both *King and Priest*—a priest of *royal dignity and authority*, made “not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the *power of an endless life*.” Heb. vii. O what a *mighty* Saviour, then, is ours! To whom “*all power* is given in heaven and earth!” Who is “*head over all things* for his body’s sake, which is the church!” Nay, who is thus head over all things as *himself part of that body*, and raising up that body into power like his own. For it is *as man*, the representative of our humanity, that he triumphs in glory. As man he suffered for us; that we might be considered as having suffered in him. As man he rose for us; that we might look upon ourselves as risen with him. And as man he reigns for us; that we may look forward to reign with him. “For one in a certain place testified,” (writes St. Paul, Heb. ii. 6—9,) “saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the Son of man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou *crownedst him with glory and honour*, and didst set him over the works of thy hands; *thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet*.” And yet, the Apostle adds, “we see not yet all things put under man”—that prophetic eulogy has not yet been accomplished in the race of men; it must have therefore a deeper meaning; it must refer to him who is the head of that race—the representative of man. And “we *do see Jesus*” the head and representative of man—*THE man*—“who was made a little lower than the angels in order to the suffering of death” we do see him, in fulfilment of that prophetic hymn, “*crowned with glory and honour!*” And thus in this exaltation of the representative we have the pledge of the exaltation of the race!—In the fulfilment of that promised dignity to the Head of our kind, we have the assurance of its ultimate fulfilment to all the members of his body. Though

man is made, for a little time, lower than the angels, he shall be crowned with glory and honour. There shall come a time when regenerated man shall tread all enemies under his feet : when sin shall have no more power over him : when earth and the things of sense shall all be subject to him : when, even as his ascended Lord, he shall be *king* as well as priest to God and his Father ! “ They sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ; and hast made us unto our God *kings and priests* : and *we shall reign on the earth !* ” Rev. v. 9, 10.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

THERE is something very solemn in the thought that we are living in the midst of an undeveloped scheme of things—our own selves parts and portions of a history which has been unrolling from the first creation, but whose final chapters are still to come. We seem to partake of that awful pause in the manifestations of God which is so sublimely symbolized in the Apocalypse, where it is said, “When he had opened the seventh seal there was *silence in heaven* about the space of half an hour:”—the angels gathering themselves together—preparing themselves to sound the trumpet of announcement—and the prayers of the saints ascending before the throne as if to urge the suit of sacred earnestness, “How long, Holy and true?—How long?”—And yet, a *pause*—a silence in heaven for half an hour!

Such was the pause among the people who were praying without at the time of incense, when Zacharias had gone into the temple of the Lord; and “they marvelled that he staid so long in the temple.” Such was the pause of earnest expectation with which the Israelites must have waited, on the day of atonement, for the coming out, from the awful Holy of Holies, of their high priest and representative, to pronounce over them the blessing of Jehovah. Such is the pause of the waiting church of Christ, which, having watched her ascending

Lord into the heavens, now looks out for his appearing the second time, without sin, to her salvation.

How intimately, then, is the subject of this chapter connected with that of the last. We considered there the Exaltation of Jesus into heaven, and his appearing there for us before the throne of God. We have now to throw forward our minds to His *return from heaven* to finish the work of a world's salvation. "FROM THENCE," says our Creed, "HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD."

And here we shall have to consider, first, the Certainty of our Lord's coming again; and secondly, the Purpose for which he will come.

AS TO THE CERTAINTY OF THE COMING AGAIN OF CHRIST, this is based on the same foundation as that of all our belief in all his history. We are perhaps too much inclined to admit something like a distinction between the facts of History, and the facts of Prophecy: between what is *recorded* as being past and done, and what is *promised* as yet to come. And we should be ready, even to change the very terms in which we speak of them; calling the things past and recorded, matters of *certainty*; the things promised and to come, matters of *expectation* only; almost conjecture. Now this distinction is perfectly correct concerning all human affairs not foretold to us by God. It is, in this case, of the past only that we can speak with certainty; of the future we can only surmise, conjecture, hope. But *not so as regards the history of our Lord*. Not so as regards any one of the particulars, which have been revealed to us, of his work of salvation, from its first beginning to its furthest end. For, what is the ground of our faith in the things that have taken place? Just simply *Testimony*—the testimony of fully accredited witnesses, on their personal authority, that Jesus was born; that Jesus was crucified; that

Jesus rose again; that Jesus ascended into heaven. And what is the ground of our faith in the things which are yet to take place? Just exactly *this same testimony*—the testimony of fully accredited witnesses, on their personal authority, that He, the same, who was born, and was crucified, and rose again, and ascended into heaven, *shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead*. It is no conjecture, I say, of speculative minds; it is no surmise of a natural sense of retribution; it is no yearning of holy men for their Master's glory or the good of the world; on which this doctrine rests. It is nothing less than an authoritative declaration, by men of God—in the name of God—that thus it shall be in the history of the world, because thus it already is in the mind of God; that thus it shall be *seen* in God's own time, because thus it *is determined* in God's own will. The second coming of Christ is as much a *Fact* as the first one. The sufficiency of the testimony to His future manifestation is as complete as is that of the testimony to his past one. And even as the prophets of old were so full of the reality of the things which they saw in vision, that their very grammar is affected by it; and they speak in the present tense, as before their eyes, of things which only in the course of ages were to come into being; so may we also, transported by faith on to the very moment of Christ's actual re-appearing, adopt concerning it the language of St. John, and say, "I *saw* heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called faithful and true, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war!"

But it is not enough to refer to the testimony of fully accredited men of God, even the Apostles of Christ, to his coming again; we have, moreover, *the unqualified assertion of that great Being himself*. While he was yet on earth, accomplishing the first part of his work, he spoke habitually, solemnly, unhesitatingly, of this its final completion. As the Baptist

was the herald of Christ's first coming, so Jesus himself was the herald of his second coming. He spoke as his own prophet. He acted as his own forerunner. He declared his return, to his *disciples*. "The Son of man *shall come* in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works." Matt. xvi. 27. And he proclaimed it to his *enemies*, before the council. "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and *coming* in the clouds of heaven." Matt. xxvi. 64. Now, in this, as in every other matter, you must give your full faith to Jesus, or you can give him none at all. There is no medium. You must accept him altogether, in the fulness of his claims, as to his Divine nature—his saving power—his final glory; or he cannot be to you even a prophet, a teacher, nay nor a holy man! All that he is, and all that he has done, is the warrant and pledge of all that he has promised to be and to do. He told his disciples beforehand that He, though Messiah, (impossible to conceive!) should die by a malefactor's death! And in three years he was crucified! He told them, yet further, that when thus crucified he should nevertheless (incredible to say!) rise again! And in three days he came forth from the tomb! He told them, again, that when thus risen he should (hard to be imagined!) ascend up where he was before! And after forty days, "while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight!" He told them, further, that there were some standing among them who should not taste of death till they saw him coming in that providential visitation of awful judgment which was to be the pledge as it was the partial pre-accomplishment, of his final coming in his kingdom! And in less than thirty years Jerusalem was destroyed! Now, in all the first cases, as he said so was it done. And *shall not the last case be the same?* As he has said, shall it not be done? Shall the

difference of interval between the promise and the fulfilment make any difference in the *authority* of the promise, and the *certainty* of the fulfilment? You have given your answer to this question, every time you have said your Creed. You have declared, "I BELIEVE,"—that "THENCE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD!"

And after this testimony, therefore, we scarcely need that additional one, which still must not be left unnoticed, *the assurance of the angels to the assembled disciples*, when their Lord had left them to ascend up into heaven. An assurance which can, indeed, add no certainty to the fact of Christ's return, but which does add to it interest and awfulness; by expressly connecting that coming down from heaven with his going up into heaven; and thereby teaching us to look for the second fact to be as real, as manifest, as plain, as was the first fact. "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, *shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*" Acts i. 11. Was he taken up in figure? Did he pierce the clouds in metaphor? Was his *Ascent* nothing but the exaltation of his truth? The diffusion of his Spirit? The triumph of his authority? Then, (and then only) may we believe that his *Descent* will be nothing more. "Behold, he *cometh with clouds*, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so. Amen!" Rev. i. 7.

But why will our blessed Lord descend from heaven once more? For what PURPOSE WILL HE COME AGAIN?

This is the second point declared to us in our Creed. "From thence he shall come TO JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD."

Where we must remember that the work of judgment—of judgment of all men, both "the quick," *i. e.* those who shall

be alive at Christ's coming, and also "the dead," *i. e.* those who shall have passed into the unseen world before his coming—this work of judgment, or assigning to each man his eternal destiny, according to his character; is ascribed in Scripture to our blessed Lord *as an essential part of his kingly office*; whence the Nicene Creed adds to this clause, "and of *his kingdom* there shall be no end." We have seen before that even as our High Priest he is at the same time *our King*, being "a priest for ever after the order of *Melchizedek*," who was, like all sovereigns of old, both *priest and king*; and consequently, that when he comes forth from the temple of God in heaven, to fulfil the final function of his priestly office, to "bless the people in the name of the Lord, that they may rejoice in his name," as *a King* as well as Priest he will come forth; in royal dignity and power. But we have also formerly seen that as *the Christ*, the Anointed one whom God has set upon his throne and made his Vicegerent over all the earth, this office of government has been from the first entrusted to him—was claimed by him as his right even in the days of his humiliation—and is now exercised by him, from the right hand of the Most High, over all things, for his body's sake, which is the Church.

The coming again, then, of Jesus as Judge, will be, in the first place, in order to *vindicate to himself this royal authority*; to show himself to all men what he truly is; to receive the universal homage of a subject world. "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" said the Pharisees. "And Jesus said, *I am*; and ye shall see the Son of man, sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Mark xiv. 61, 62.

For, to *judge*, we must remember, in Eastern phraseology, is not merely to decide causes between man and man; to dispense rewards and punishments; but it is to *rule and govern*;

to act the part of a sovereign, and as a royal function, belonging to his personal duty and prerogative, to exercise justice and judgment among his people. Which idea is still preserved even in Western judicatures, in which all causes are heard and decided, and all sentences are pronounced, in the name of the sovereign, under whom, and for whom, the judges act. It is on this account that the rulers of Israel from the time of Joshua to Saul are called its "Judges." Judg. ii. 16, 17. It is in this sense, as Supreme Ruler, and *therefore* Orderer and Disposer of all things, that Abraham appeals to God himself, "Shall not *the Judge* of all the earth do right?" Gen. xviii. 25. It is in this sense that the Psalmist declares "Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south, but *God is the Judge*; he putteth down one, and setteth up another." Ps. lxxv. 6, 7. And it is because of this that he calls out to Him for redress, "O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth, show thyself; lift up thyself, thou *Judge of all the earth!*" Ps. xciv. 1, 2.

Now, it is Jesus the Son of God, thus "*showing himself*;"—lifting up himself from his throne to step forth and execute universal and final retribution;—that is proclaimed to us, when we are assured that he will come "to judge the quick and the dead." When the prophet Isaiah describes His office and qualities as the Root from the stem of Jesse, the royal Descendant of David, he makes this prominent among them, that "with righteousness *shall he judge*," *i. e.* avenge, or do right to "the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth." Isaiah xi. 4. When St. Peter had proclaimed to Cornelius "peace by Jesus Christ, as *Lord of all*," he goes on to testify that *as thus universal Lord* he "is ordained by God to be *the Judge of quick and dead*." Acts x. 36, 42. When St. James exhorts the suffering Christians to bear their persecutions with fortitude; and amidst personal anguish to cherish

brotherly love ; he points to the final interposition of their Lord, in two equivalent phrases : “ Be patient therefore, brethren,—for *the coming of the Lord* draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another—behold *the Judge* standeth at the door ! ” Jam. v. 8, 9. And when St. Paul would stimulate the timorous Timothy, he charges him to diligence, “ before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall *judge the quick and dead at his appearing* and his kingdom ; ” (2 Tim. iv. 1) ; *i. e.* when he shall appear to set up, in its full extent and manifest glory, his royal power and authority. O glorious prospect ! O exhilarating hope ! Our eyes shall see the King in his glory ! That which was once enacted before him in mockery shall then be accomplished in reality. For a crown of thorns his head shall be adorned with the diadem of universal monarchy ; for the fragile reed, he shall hold that sceptre where-with he shall rule the nations ; for the purple robe, he shall be clothed with the brightness of the sun ; and for the blasphemous bowing of the knee in mockery he shall receive the homage of a prostrate world ! “ He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him, and his enemies shall lick the dust ! ” Ps. lxxii. 8, 9.

For this will follow as the second object for which Christ comes again :—*to punish all who resist his authority.* O that a subject so dreadful should be unavoidably mixed up with one so glorious ! O that the shouts of the angelic ministers of the King of Glory should be responded to by the groans of guilty men ! Yet, can it be otherwise ? Can justice be displayed without the punishment of the wicked ? Can the grand Idea of Retribution be brought out in all its fulness, and not take the form of vengeance against the obstinate ? Can the authority of Christ be vindicated without the ruin of

those who resist that authority? Can his kingdom be set up without the “*gathering out of it all things that offend?*” Alas! We know too well that thus it must be. The word of God is full of it. The very revelation through which alone we learn God’s mercy to the penitent, tells us of it. The warnings, even of the affectionate Redeemer point to it. The forebodings of the guilty conscience of sinners themselves authenticate it. And the sense of justice in the very nature of every one of us justifies, yea demands it. The triumph of good *must* be the destruction of evil. The sovereignty of the Holy One *must* be the casting out of the defiled. “The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces, for *the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth*; and he shall give strength *unto his King*, and exalt the horn of his Anointed.” 1 Sam. ii. 10. “The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. *The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath!* He shall *judge among the heathen!*” Ps. cx. 4—6. “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall *separate them one from another*,” (there is the pure Idea of *Judgment*—discrimination—distinction—separation!) “as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, *but the goats on the left*—And then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!” Matt. xxv. 31—33, 41. And are you ready, Reader, for this awful separation? Have you settled in yourself to which class you belong? Does your present conscience, which is the index of that future sentence, place you among the sheep—or, the goats? Among the friends of Christ—or, his enemies? Among those who may rejoice in

his appearing? or, who must shudder at the very thought of it? What if, this moment, he were to come again? Would you spring forth towards him, as to a well-known, honoured Friend? Or would you start away from him with dismay; as one you have neglected, dreaded, dishonoured, disobeyed? Look and see. The time is short. Your whole life is not many years. You must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ!

But there is yet another purpose for which Christ will come, and we gladly hasten to it. He will come, thirdly, *to recompense all who have submitted to his authority*. God's *judgment* is continually represented as his interposition for the recompense of his people. "To me" he says by Moses, "belongeth vengeance, and *recompense*. For the Lord shall *judge*" (*i. e.* *avenge*) "his people, and repent himself for his servants." Deut. xxxii. 35, 36. We cannot be God's servants without having set ourselves in opposition to God's enemies. We cannot have thoroughly given ourselves up to Christ's authority without having renounced, and being daily struggling against, the authority of the world, the flesh, and the devil. And who knows not how perilous is this struggle? Who feels not how the spirits faint, the powers become exhausted, in our deadly contest; till the sore-pressed Christian pants and presses for deliverance—for a breathing time—for a rest—and joins the souls under the altar who cry out with a loud voice, "How long O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not *judge* and *avenge* us!" Rev. vi. 9, 10.

And, blessed be God! we know that "*he will avenge* his own elect, though he bear long with them!" Luke xviii. 7. He *will come* in his own time, thus to *judge his people*; to maintain their cause; to cheer their hearts; to overthrow

their adversaries ; to bruise Satan under their feet ; to bring to them that crown of righteousness which the Lord, *the righteous Judge* shall give to all who love his appearing. What says the Psalmist, when his spirit was full of this anticipation ? “ The mighty God, even the Lord hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same.”—(How grand the image here ! a general summons sounding through the earth ; the voice of the Almighty, as of the last trump, pealing in every ear, Come forth to judgment !) “ Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may *judge his people !*” (*i. e.* may avenge their cause ;) “ Gather my saints together unto me ; those that have made a covenant with me with sacrifice ! And the heavens shall declare his righteousness ; for *God is judge himself !*” Ps. xc. 1—6.

And what shall be the consequence, yea concomitant, of this vindication of Christ’s authority—and destruction of those who resist it—and recompense of those who have submitted to it ? Remember, lastly, He will come *to establish this authority in all its fulness over the regenerated earth.*

The judgment of the world is at the same time its restoration. The taking out from it all things that offend is the renewing it into its pristine beauty and order and perfection ; so that once again the Lord may look upon it and declare, with a divine complacency, Behold, it is very good ! “ For we,” writes the Apostle Peter, “ according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” 2 Peter iii. 13. “ Repent ye therefore, and be converted,” said the same Apostle, to the Jews, “ that your sins may be blotted out, *when the times of refreshing shall*

come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, who before was preached unto you, whom the heaven must receive until the times of the restitution of all things, of which times God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began!" Acts iii. 19—21. O who can form an adequate image of those blessed times when *order shall be the universal law!* when sin shall have fled the earth;—when falsehood, and injustice, and violence, and hatred, and rapine, shall be no more;—when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid;—when men shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away;—when the last enemy shall be destroyed, which is death;—when, in one emphatic, all-comprehending word, *there shall be no more curse*, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be on earth, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads! Well might the Psalmist call on universal nature to exult in this time of her delivery, for which she has groaned and travailed in pain until now! Well might he say, "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad, let the sea roar and the fulness thereof; let the field be joyful, and all that is therein; then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord; *for he cometh!* for he COMETH, to JUDGE the earth! He shall JUDGE the world with righteousness and the people with his truth!" Ps. xevi. 11—13.

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

PART III.

GOD THE HOLY GHOST.

The whole economy and dispensation of the kingdom of Christ is managed
by THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST.

BISHOP HOPKINS.

The Father to create, the Son to redeem, the Holy Ghost to sanctify and regenerate. Whereof the last, the more it is hid from our understanding, the more it ought to move all men to wonder at the secret and mighty working of God's Holy Spirit which is within us. For it is the Holy Ghost, and no other thing, that doth quicken the minds of men, stirring up good and godly motions in their hearts, which are agreeable to the will and commandment of God, such as otherwise of their own crooked and perverse nature they should never have. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit. As who should say, Man of his own nature is fleshly and carnal, corrupt and naught, sinful and disobedient to God, without any spark of goodness in him, without any virtuous or godly motion, only given to evil thoughts and wicked deeds. As for the works of the Spirit, the fruits of faith, charitable and godly motions, if he have any at all in him, they proceed only of THE HOLY GHOST, who is the only worker of our sanctification, and maketh us new men in Christ Jesus.—*Homily for Whitsunday.*

PART III.

GOD THE HOLY GHOST.

CHAPTER I.

THE NATURE OF THE HOLY GHOST.

NEVER do we more need religious experience, than when considering religious doctrine. For it is only through the medium of the atmosphere, so to speak, which surrounds ourselves that we can have any discernment of the far-off truths of God. The *source* of those truths is indeed the word of God, and only from that central light can they stream forth to us; but the *perception* of those truths by each one, as guides to him through life, depends entirely on his personal susceptibility for them—the relation to them of his state of mind. Abstract dogmas, in their abstractness, have either no meaning to us, or a false one; and hence the coldness and the errors of merely speculative theologians. But doctrines looked at as responsive to our moral and spiritual yearnings are beheld by us in just those bearings, and with just those modifications, which render them not dead metaphysical notions, but living practical Ideas. We cannot get essentially wrong in our consideration of them, because, at every step, the *real* within us regulates the speculative, and keeps it in its due relation to our moral and spiritual well-being. And thus it is that he who desires to do the will of God is best qualified

to judge concerning each doctrine proposed to him, whether it be of God, or whether men speak of themselves.

We have seen, in former chapters, how true this is of our right apprehension of the Creed. On our experience, or consciousness, of certain facts of our spiritual condition, depends our appreciation of the truths which it declares to us. Our sense of *Limitation and dependence* enables us to feel the first great truth concerning "God the Father, who made us and all the world." Our consciousness of *Guilt and ruin* prepares us to receive the testimony concerning "God the Son, who hath redeemed us and all mankind." And our experience of *Corruption and infirmity* makes welcome to us the doctrine concerning "GOD THE HOLY GHOST, WHO SANCTIFIETH US, AND ALL THE ELECT PEOPLE OF GOD."

It is at this third main Division of the Apostles' Creed that we are now arrived. O may HE HIMSELF, of whom we are to treat, be present with us in our meditations on Him! illuminate our minds, direct our judgments, sanctify our hearts, work in us as the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord!

Now, in this third Division of the Creed there will be found three main particulars requiring our attention: The *Nature* of the Holy Ghost—His *Office*—and His *Work*.

We give this Chapter to THE NATURE OF THE HOLY GHOST.

And here, as in our meditations on the Nature of the Son, we shall find the Names, or *Titles*, given to the Holy Ghost in the Creed a sufficient indication to us of his Nature.

For, First, He is called "the Holy GHOST." Which term, "Ghost," you are aware, is an old word, now but little used, for what we at present call "Spirit." Whence the same event which is declared in St. Luke (iii. 22), where it is said

"The Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape," is expressed in the parallel passage of St. Matthew (iii. 16) by the words "he saw the *Spirit* of God descending like a dove;" the original term in each passage being in fact the same. And this term "Spirit," you are equally aware, is the best that has been found to express that *invisible substance* which dwells in us, as the subject of thought, and feeling, and will—the principle of mental life and action; which is in fact our proper self; which we also call, though less properly,* our soul. Our soul, in this sense, is our spirit, our ghost; distinct entirely from the body, and the bodily life.†

Whence you learn, further, that in the use of these terms, "Ghost," and "Spirit," for the *invisible* substance which we call soul, you must be careful not to mix up with them any notion of *mere shadowy unsubstantial* being, as when people talk of "ghosts," as visionary appearances; nor of *mere power and vital energy*, as when they speak of acting *with spirit* and animation; but must remember that they denote the most *real and substantial* of any existence that we know of. They express the proper being of *man*:—each one of us, though dwelling, for a few years, in a material body, is essentially a

* Less properly: For the term soul, from the German *seele*, and Greek ζῶω, to breathe, to live, like the Latin *anima*, from Greek ἀνεμος, wind or breath, more distinctly designates the principle of animal life—the animal soul; which is essentially distinct from the principle of mental life—the mental substance—the intelligent spirit. See on this important point, which bears so essentially on our conceptions, not only of *man*, and his present dignity and future hopes—but also of *God*, and his essential distinction from the life that breathes through all things, HERBART, *Encyclop. der Philosophie*, ch. xiv. p. 206.

† When Sapphira is said (Acts v. 10) to have "yielded up the ghost," the original is ἐξέψυχεν, breathed forth her *soul*—her animal life. But when Stephen, with his last breath cried "Lord Jesus receive my *spirit*," (Acts vii. 59) the original is πνεῦμα, the mental substance, the man.

spirit—a ghost. And they denote, moreover, the proper being of *God himself*:—"God," said our blessed Lord to the woman of Samaria, "is a Spirit." As surely, therefore as your soul—*i. e.* your self—is a living, substantial, though invisible being; much more substantial, in fact, because more simple and more permanent, than the complex, fluctuating, mortal body (which men sometimes speak of as if it alone were substance, but which is no better than the temporary habitation of your proper self): yea, as surely as the Eternal, self-subsisting God, who created all things, who was before the mountains were brought forth or even the earth and the world were made, and yet who is called Spirit, is a living, substantial, though invisible, being: so surely, when you say "I believe in the Holy Ghost" do you express your faith in One who is not the less *real*, because unseen by human eye, not the less *living and substantial*, because unfelt by human sense.

And I need scarcely tell you how this real substantiality of the Holy Ghost is, not so much *laid down* as *assumed*, and taken for granted, in the word of God, in all the things that are said of Him. For just the same acts of thought, and feeling, and will are there ascribed to Him, as are ascribed to the human soul, or spirit, or ghost; and he is spoken of as the subject of these acts, as much as we ourselves are. Do *you*, (that is) or does your soul, or spirit, or ghost, exercise thought and judgment, and purpose? So also does the Holy Ghost. He is said by St. Paul to "know the things of God," and to "search all things, yea the deep things of God." 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11. And as to his working in the heart of man, he is said to do this "dividing to every man severally *as he will*," *i. e.* with the exercise of discrimination, judgment, choice. 1 Cor. xii. 11. Are *you* again, *i. e.* your soul, or spirit, or ghost, the subject of feeling and emotion? So also is the Holy Ghost. St. Paul exhorts us "not to *grieve*

the holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption." Eph. iv. 30. And are *you*, further, *i. e.* your soul, or spirit, or ghost, the living centre of active will, originating energy, and deliberate influence on other beings? So also is the Holy Ghost. "The Holy Ghost said" to the Christians at Antioch, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Acts xiii. 2. And when Paul and Timothy "had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia" they "were *forbidden of the Holy Ghost* to preach the word in Asia. And after they were come to Mysia they assayed to go into Bithynia, but *the Holy Ghost suffered them not.*" Acts xvi. 6, 7.

But further—and this is the third step in our argument,—these personal thoughts and feelings and acts are ascribed, in the word of God, to the Holy Ghost, as the invisible, and yet substantial, subject of them, in express distinction from the persons *in* whom, or *through* whom, or *by* whom, or *towards* whom he exercises them. That the Holy Ghost is distinct from the persons *in* whom he works, you see in such passages as Romans viii. 16; where we are told that "the Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit," *i. e.* in conjunction with, in addition to,* our spirit, "that we are the children of God." That the Holy Ghost is distinct from the Lord Jesus Christ, *through* whom he is sent, you see in our Lord's own declaration to his disciples, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you *another comforter*," *i. e.* a guardian Friend; who is promised in the place of, and therefore distinct from, Jesus himself, who was going away from them, "that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth." John xiv. 16, 17. And that the Holy Ghost is distinct also from the

* For, "συμμαρτυρεῖν nunquam non *unâ* cum aliquo testari, cum aliquo, qui et ipse testatur, testimonium dicere denotat (Soph. Philoct. 436. Eur. Hel. 1080)." FRITZCHE *ad Rom.*

Father, *by* whom he is sent, is sufficiently implied in that very act of *sending*; John xiv. 26 ;—in the assertion of Jesus that this Spirit of truth “*proceedeth from the Father* ;” John xv. 26 ;—in the declaration of St. Paul that this same Spirit “*maketh intercession for us*” from the depths of our hearts, with the Father, “*according to the will of God* ;” Rom. viii. 27 ;—and in the solemn injunction of our Lord, in which he prescribes that very formula of baptism of which our Creed is but the expansion, “*Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them,*” *not*, in the name of God *as* Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three different *aspects* merely of one and the same subject, but “*in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*” *

The Holy Ghost, then, by virtue of his very title “*The Spirit,*” is no mere *quality* of some other subject—no mere *operation* of some other agent,—but himself a subject, (like our own spirit, or ghost, or soul,) of thoughts, and feelings and acts—an *invisible*—yet a *substantial*—and a *distinct* Existence.

But this is not all. The Being in whom we profess to believe in the Creed, is termed, moreover, emphatically, “*The HOLY Ghost* :” *i. e.* the sacred, august, *divine*, Spirit. In the same sense, and no lower one, in which Hannah says “*There is none holy as the Lord* ; for there is none beside thee.” 1 Sam. ii. 2. In the same sense, and no lower one, in which our blessed Lord addresses God, when he says, “*Holy,*” *i. e.* sacred, awful, *divine*, “*Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me.*” John xvii.

* Where, “*the distinctiveness*” (of the three persons) “*is imported both in the article put to each, ‘ τοῦ Πατρὸς of the Father, τοῦ Υἱοῦ of the Son, τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος of the Holy Ghost ;’ and also in the particle καὶ, as distinctly put to each : ‘ and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’ ”*—GOODWIN.

14. In the same sense, and no lower one, in which God himself demands, by his prophet, “To whom will ye liken me, or shall I be equal, saith *the Holy One*.” Isa. xl. 25. In the same sense, therefore, and no lower one, in which the angels and archangels which surround the throne of the Most High cry before him day and night, “*Holy, Holy, Holy*, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come; the whole earth is full of thy glory!” Isa. vi. 3. Rev. iv. 8.

And hence, this same Being, who is termed in some passages of Scripture, “The *Holy Ghost* ;” and in others “THE Spirit,” *i. e.* the Source and Lord of all Spirits; is called again in others, “The Spirit of God.” To Him divine *works* are attributed—as when it is said, “The Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters, and God said Let there be light and there was light.” Gen. i. 2, 3. To Him divine *qualities* are assigned—as when He is said to “search *all things*, even the deep things of God.” 1 Cor. ii. 10. To Him a divine *authority* is vindicated, so that “whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” Matt. xii. 32. And to Him a divine *equality of Power, of Majesty, of vital Energy, and of worship*, with the Father and the Son is assigned. Like them, He is the Author of our Salvation:—“Elect” says St. Peter, “according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of *the Spirit*, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter i. 2. Like them, He is the object to whose service we are solemnly consecrated:—“Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of *the Holy Ghost*.” Matt. xxviii. 19. Like them, He is the Supreme Life in the Christian Church:—“There are diversities of gifts, but the same *Spirit*, and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord, and there are diversities of operations, but it is the

same God which worketh all in all." 1 Cor. xii. 4—6. And like them, He is the Source from whence all grace and blessing are implored:—"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of *the Holy Ghost*, be with you all. Amen!" 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

Here, then, we are brought to that incomprehensible, and yet most certain truth, of the Holy, distinct, yet undivided, TRINITY; three persons but one God. It follows, you see, unavoidably, from what, in this and in preceding chapters, we have learned, from the word of God. We have found before, from that authentic and authoritative source, that the Son possesses Deity. We see now that the Holy Ghost is spoken of as possessing Deity. And can we express these truths in any more intelligible language than that of the First Article of our Church? "In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons of one substance, power, and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost!" We attempt not to explain. We only declare what we read. We invent not the doctrine. We only submit to the conclusions which the Scripture statements force on us. And that this doctrine, however *obscure in itself*, is yet *not obscurely declared in Scripture*, this we firmly maintain. It is, we say, *distinct*, though it cannot be *clear*—*distinctly revealed*, though it never can be *clearly understood*. And I beg you to consider, on all subjects like this, in which our only business is to *ascertain*, and not to *elucidate*, the *facts* of the inspired page, that those two terms "*distinct*," and "*clear*," express very different notions; which notions need by no means be found co-existing in one and the same object. An object is *distinct* when its *outline* is plainly marked out,—when it is *distinguished from* all other objects. It is *clear*, when *within that outline itself*, you perceive all its parts and features. And thus, what is perfectly *distinct*, as contrasted

with other objects, may at the same time be far from *clear*, as looked at in itself. The glorious sun is *distinct* in the heavens ; no one can miss observing it ; no man can mistake it for anything else ; it stands out a broad *fact* on the aërial page. Yet that sun *in itself*—is it *clear* ? Can you map out its disk ? Can you penetrate the darkness of its excessive light ? Can you tell me *clearly* its *nature*, though you see so *distinctly* its *existence* ? Just so is the doctrine to which we have been led in this chapter. It is *distinct* in Scripture ; even as the sun is distinct in the firmament. But do we therefore say it is *clear* in itself ? We see enough of it *relatively* to all other theories to say *what it is not* ; (in which distinctions lies the main merit of the Athanasian Creed) but do we therefore pretend to say *absolutely what it is* ? Nay rather, with trembling humility, we confess, with St. Augustine, that the sum of our certainty is to know *that* it is. “ Truly ” says that writer, “ since the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father ; and again, the Holy Spirit is neither the Father, nor the Son ; it is plain they are three. But when men ask *what* three ? then language is beggared ; we have nothing to answer. We call them indeed ‘ persons,’ but we do this, not as attempting to say *what* they are, but only that we may not leave the question altogether without reply.” *

Thus then we assert that the doctrine of the Trinity is distinct, though not clear. We know *what it is not*—it is not Arianism—it is not Sabellianism—it is not Tritheism. But *what it is*, we do not know. We do not pretend to know. We are sure we cannot know. It shines out brightly on the page

* “ *Revera enim, cum Pater non sit Filius et Filius non sit Pater, et Spiritus Sanctus ille, qui etiam donum Dei vocatur, nec Pater sit nec Filius, tres utique sunt ; tamen cum quæritur, quid tres ? magna prorsus inopia humanum laborat eloquium : dictum est tamen tres personæ, non ut illud diceretur sed ne taceretur.*”—*De Trinit.* v. 9.

of Scripture, but its very brightness blinds us. It is like the vision of the Almighty to St. John: "He that sat upon the throne was *to look at, like a jasper and a sardine stone!*" too dazzling for any steady gaze! It is like the Almighty himself: "dwelling in the light that no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see!" "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than hades, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea!"

And yet, forget not, that this awfully mysterious God is not unconnected with the creatures whom he has made. He is infinitely above us in nature, but he comes down to us in love. He is far beyond our comprehension, but he is within the reach of our necessities. The doctrine of the Holy Ghost is specially the doctrine of God communicating himself to his creation. As the Idea of the Father is that of God as the *Ground* of all things—and the Idea of the Son is that of God as the *Law* of all things—so the Idea of the Holy Ghost is that of God as the *Life* of all things. The Father originates—the Son regulates—the Holy Ghost actuates. The Father is Deity invisible—the Son is Deity manifested—the Holy Ghost is Deity communicated. "He *proceedeth* from the Father and the Son;" says the Nicene Creed. "Though one" as an ancient Jewish writer says of the divine Wisdom, "He can do all things; and remaining in himself, he maketh all things new; and in all ages entering into holy souls, he maketh them friends of God and prophets." From his quickening presence flows all the *physical life* of this animated world. "By *his Spirit* he hath garnished the heavens." Job xxvi. 13. "Thou sendest forth *thy Spirit*, they are created, and thou renewest the face of the earth." Ps. civ. 30. From his inspiration, again, comes all the *mental life* of the human

soul. "There is a spirit in man; and *the inspiration of the Almighty* giveth them understanding." Job xxxii. 8. And through His inworking is produced all that is great, and noble, and energetic in the *moral life* of the human will. By Him, God infused himself into his prophets: "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter i. 21. By Him, he actuated the Apostles: "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Acts ii. 4. And by Him he dwells in every believer; to be in him the source of all heavenly cogitations, holy feelings, and vigorous deeds: "Ye are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit!" Eph. ii. 22. But for this doctrine of the Spirit what would God be to us? But a mere lifeless notion! not only distinct from the universe, but separated from it! not only above the world but altogether unconnected with the world! The dry philosophical dogma of the Unity of God presents us only with an infinitely abstract, and infinitely distant, first Cause—but no *living, present, actuating* God. The Scripture doctrine, on the contrary, exhibits to us this God as *manifested* in all ages to give law to his creation; and as *present* in all places to animate that creation.* Even as says the Prophet; "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and

* "The utter rejection of all present and living communion with the Universal Spirit impoverishes Deism itself, and renders it as cheerless as Atheism, from which indeed it would differ only by an obscure impersonation of what the Atheist receives unpersonified under the name of Fate or Nature." COLERIDGE: *Aids to Reflection*, p. 82, (1st Ed.)

Whence he says, p. 170, "The scriptural and only true Idea of God will, in its developement, be found to involve the Idea of the Trinity. As will, indeed, *any* Idea of God which does not either identify the Creator with the creation; or else represent the supreme Being as a mere impersonal Law, or *Ordo ordinans*, differing from the law of gravity only by its universality."

not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.” Jer. xxiii. 23, 24.

And O, then, bring this lofty subject to a practical point, by bringing it down *into your heart!* Feel your need of spiritual communion with the Being who *made* you—and who *governs* you—and seek this communion through the present indwelling of his Spirit *actuating* you. It were vain to think correctly of the Holy Ghost, if we do not know personally the Holy Ghost. And this personal knowledge, or experience, of the Holy Ghost is to be gained only in the exercise of personal love to God, and efforts to please God. “If a man *love me*” says our Lord, “he will *keep my words*; and my Father will love him, and we will *come unto him*, and make our abode with him!” John xiv. 23.

CHAPTER II.

THE OFFICE OF THE HOLY GHOST.

WE have said that in the doctrine of the Apostles' Creed concerning the Holy Ghost there are three main points proposed to us—His Nature—His Office—and His Work.

As to His Nature, we have seen that he is set before us as an invisible—substantial—distinct—divine Being ; the Communicator of the quickening and sustaining energy of Deity, throughout the Universe : a character which the Nicene Creed expresses very forcibly, though very briefly, when it denominates Him “the Lord and Giver of Life.”

In descending now to the next main point,—THE OFFICE of the Holy Ghost, we must contract our view from his general relation to the universe, to that particular connexion which he enters into with the disciples of Christ : for it is with reference to this connexion that we have been baptized into his name, and that we confess him in our Creed ; as says our Catechism, “I learn to believe in God the Holy Ghost *as sanctifying me and all the elect people of God.*”

Now the Office of the Holy Ghost in this relation, and towards this particular body of men—the followers of Christ—consists in *the supplying to them the presence of their Lord, by a real indwelling in their soul.*

That its main object is TO SUPPLY THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST to his people is manifest from the terms in which our Lord

promises the communication of this divine Being. Throw your mind back into that parting scene, depicted by St. John, (ch. xiv) when this great promise was made; and you will see that the sum of Christ's consolation to his alarmed disciples amounts to this, "All that I have hitherto been to you, that shall the Holy Ghost henceforth be, as my representative, in you!"

And what had Jesus been to his disciples? Their all! He had called them to himself—he had taught them the truths of God—he had comforted them—he had directed them—he had, to some extent, at least, influenced their minds, won their affections, secured to himself their will. He was, in a word, their guide, companion, and own familiar friend. And we have only to look at the utter consternation into which they were thrown when the notion of his removal from them was at last forced on their comprehension; and yet further at the childish weakness and despondency which they displayed when they were left without his presence; to judge to what an extent, (far beyond what even they themselves suspected,) they had been leaning on this gracious Friend, and losing, almost, their own personality in his. Such was Jesus to his disciples. And they began to *feel*, in their newly roused apprehension, that he was such. "Their heart was troubled, and they were afraid."

Now, how does their gracious Master cheer them in their despondency? Not simply, observe, by calling on them to exercise faith in God, and in himself; to look forward to the end for which he was about to leave them, and to the certainty of his ultimate return to take them to himself: (v. 1—4) but, moreover, by promising them *in the mean time*, and till this return, One like himself, to supply his place; to realize to them his presence; and to be to them all, and more than all, that he himself had been. "I will pray the Father," he says, v. 16—18, "and he will give you *another Comforter*," another

such a Friend, and Guide, and Counsellor, and Protector, (for the word, Paraclete, includes all these notions) *as I myself have been to you* ; “even the Spirit of truth !” Or, as Jesus reiterates the promise, in the 26th verse, “the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send *in my name*,” *i. e.* in my place, as my representative, to fulfil to you my office, “he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” “For,” he adds, in chap. xvi. 13, “he shall *not speak of himself*” as some one acting independently and differently from me, “but whatsoever he shall *hear*” (*i. e.* from me) “that shall he speak ; and he shall glorify me,” (*i. e.* shall give you enlarged conceptions of my character and dignity) “for he shall *receive of mine and shew it unto you.*”

Here then you perceive how plainly the office of the Holy Ghost is set forth by our Lord as that of *supplying the place of Christ himself*—being another Friend like him ; completing his instructions ; developing his character and dignity ; and carrying on his work. What Jesus was in the flesh, that was the Holy Ghost to be in the heart. What Jesus was visibly, that was the Holy Ghost to be invisibly. He who had hitherto dwelt *with* them, at their side, in the person of Jesus, should thenceforth be *in* them, in direct communication with their own minds.

And hence it is that the Holy Ghost is called so frequently *the Spirit of CHRIST* : and that the Nicene Creed declares that “he proceedeth from the Father, *and the Son.*” The Spirit had been given without measure, in his entire indwelling, to Jesus, for his work on earth. The manifestations of that Spirit, in word, and deed, his disciples had already beheld, while Jesus was before them : “Ye know him,” says our Lord, “for he dwelleth with you ;” that is, “In my person, and as breathing forth himself from me, you are already

acquainted with his purity and power." And it is therefore as proceeding from him ; transfused, as it were, into them, from himself ; that he promises that, on his departure, this same Spirit should be "*in them.*" Of which transfusion Jesus gave them an expressive symbol, after his resurrection, when "*he breathed on them and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.*" John xx. 22.

And thus, moreover, being the Spirit of the *Father*, which He gave to Christ ; and also the Spirit of *Christ*, as dwelling in him throughout his ministry, the promised presence of this Comforter in the heart of the disciples, to supply the place of Christ, is represented as effecting, at the same time, the presence of *Christ*, through whom he is vouchsafed ; nay and of *the Father* by whom he is vouchsafed. For after that Jesus had said, v. 17, "*he now dwelleth by you but he shall be in you,*" he adds, v. 18, "*I will not leave you comfortless,*" *i. e.* like orphans, without a friend and guardian, "*I myself will come to you.*" And again, v. 21, "*he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and I will manifest myself unto him.*" And yet again, v. 23, "*If any man love me he will keep my words ; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.*" O essential unity of the Godhead ! that to receive the Holy Ghost is to receive the Spirit of *Christ* ; and to receive the Spirit of Christ is to receive the Spirit of *God* ! that to have the Spirit in us is to have Christ in us, and to have Christ in us is to have God in us ! Even as St. Paul prays for the Ephesians, "*that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man ; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith ;—that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God !*" Eph. iii. 16, 17, 19.

But, secondly, the Holy Ghost supplies the place of Christ

to his people, BY A REAL INDWELLING IN THEIR SOULS. This point is not less clearly stated than the former. "He shall be *in you*." Particularly when you look at the contrast intended, by that expression, with what went before. "He now dwelleth *with you*" in my person, objectively ; but "he shall be *in you*," in yourselves subjectively.* This, indeed, indicates a fact not lying within the sphere of the senses, or of the understanding, but emphatically *transcendent* ; that is, *lying beyond* those narrow confines. But still it is a fact of which our reason may be in some sort convinced ; and which, at any rate, is assured to our *faith* by the unerring testimony of the word of God.

The Indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the heart of the believer is, we must carefully remember, a Fact, *not perceptible by our senses*. For in this particular it is that the true doctrine of Scripture is distinguished from the pretensions of fanaticism. Men have imagined to themselves the Spirit, and spoken of the Spirit, as if He were just the reverse of what his very name denotes, and were not Spirit but Matter—in some form or other, however ethereal and refined, still Matter. They dream of Him as some physical substance ; they speak of his communication as of that of some physical gift ; they fancy that they are sensible of his presence within them, as of some physical inhabitant. I was once told, by a really earnest though ignorant woman, that she knew she had received the Holy Ghost, for she sometimes felt him fluttering in her bosom ! And this, extravagant as it may seem, (and what

* John xiv. 17 : *παρ' ὑμῶν μένει, καὶ ἐν ὑμῶν ἔσται*. Where the *παρ* must indicate *apud, juxta, vos* ; namely, as dwelling in, and manifesting himself by, me. For the verb is *present* ; and to interpret it in the future, would be only to anticipate the next clause. Compare v. 25 : "These things have I spoken unto you, *being yet present with you*, *παρ' ὑμῶν μένων*." Also ch. i. 39, "They abode with him (*παρ' αὐτῷ ἔμειναν*) that day." And ch. iv. 40 : The Samaritans "besought him that he would *tarry with them* : (*μεῖναι παρ' αὐτοῖς*) and he abode there (*ἔμεινεν ἐκεῖ*) two days." Also Acts ix. 43.

one would hesitate to speak of but as an illustration of our point) is yet only a more gross mode of expressing, what is necessarily implied in the very notion of all who fancy that in any way, by any of our external senses or our inward feelings, we can be *sensible* of the indwelling of this essentially SPIRITUAL—*i. e. not sensible*—Guest. For all the language of the Fanatic, so far as it is specifically different from the meaning of the word of God, is grounded on just this error, that it assumes his inward perception, not merely of *the graces* which are wrought by the Spirit in his intellect, and affections, and determinations; but of *the Spirit himself* so operating on the soul, *without*, yea even *against* his reason and his will. To which assumption I answer only this. If such perception is possible, why does the Apostle call on the Corinthians to exercise their *mind and conscience*—not their bodily senses, or their unintelligent emotions, but their deliberative faculties,—to ascertain if they possess the Spirit of Christ, and therefore Christ himself, within their souls? “*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith;*”—it is a matter, observe, of rational deduction, not of instinctive sensation;—“*prove your own-selves;*”—try, probe, and test your character and disposition—“*know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*” 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

But, though the Indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the soul of the believer is no matter of perception to either an outward or an inward sense, it is a Fact, of which *even our reason may be in some sort convinced*. That is, though we cannot be *sensible* of His presence in us, yet that presence we cannot but *infer* from its effects. For what is the fact? It is a fact, to which thousands can testify; and for confirmation of which we can refer to the living words, and deeds, and character of thousands; that those who are truly followers of Christ, who

love him and keep his commandments, are endowed with certain principles, dispositions, and habits ; of mind and feeling and will ; which the world of the unconverted has not received, neither does it understand. The *knowledge* of God as our reconciled Father in Christ—the *love* of God as our Friend and Saviour—the *will*, and in some poor measure the *act*, of self-devotion to the *moral service* of that God and Father thus revealed to us and beloved by us,—these are *facts*, concerning which we make appeal, not only to the honest, though humble, consciousness of the Christian himself, but to the admissions, even the accusations, of the world. The world itself cannot *deny*, what sometimes it attributes to unworthy motives ; sometimes it ridicules as singular and affected ; sometimes it exclaims against as needlessly strict and rigid ; sometimes it pities as enthusiastic self-sacrifice. Men *do* become changed from godlessness to piety. Men do exhibit spirituality, self-denial, unearthliness. Men do take up their cross and follow their Master through evil report, and good report. Whether religion be good or bad, rational or irrational, just or extravagant, it assuredly *is*. And he has little knowledge of mankind, and of the actual life around him, who doubts that it really, sincerely, essentially *is*. And that which observation will tell us of men living, history tells us of men passed away. The annals of genuine Church History—the history, that is, of men possessed of the spirit of their Master,—from the book of the Acts, and the letters of the Apostles, downwards through the pages of a Milner or a Neander, and a D'Aubigné, all substantiate the fact that there have been, (as there are,) men, professing themselves in earnest, yea and most evidently in earnest, who possessed certain principles, dispositions and habits, which they gained not from *the world*, for the world disowns them ; and which they found not *in themselves*, for they had walked contrary to them, yea and still

find something in their own personal nature opposed to them. Here then are facts in the consciousness, and facts in the life, which must have a cause. But this cause is not in the world—it is not in our own corrupt—*still* corrupt,—and earthly nature. And yet this cause as operating on our inmost states of mind must be assumed in close connection with that mind: it must be *in* us, though not *of* us. Where then will you seek this cause—where will you find it—but in a source distinct from the world—distinct from your own fallen spirit—and yet enshrined within the very centre of that spirit—that is, in *the Holy Spirit* of God? “No man,” says St. Paul, “can say that Jesus is the Lord but *by the Holy Ghost.*” 1 Cor. xii. 3. And again: “We have received, not the spirit of the world, but *the Spirit which is of God*; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” 1 Cor. ii. 12.

But then, perhaps it may be said, True; God does work all things that are good. To the Spirit of God we must ascribe all holy principles, dispositions, and habits. But, why suppose this Spirit *dwelling in the individual soul*? Why contend for a supernatural, inconceivable, unphilosophical grace, mysteriously acting in and with the human mind and will? God works on us by means of our fellow men. Christ acts through his people. The Spirit of God dwells in, and operates by, his church. And all the effects which you refer to may have been produced by the ordinary efficacy of human instruction, discipline, persuasion, example. To which we answer, that reason itself, in proportion as we attend to it, will show us the *insufficiency* of this hypothesis to account for the phenomena to which we point. No doubt God does work by man on men. Assuredly Christ does make use of his people as the channels of his influence, on the world without them, and on individual Christians around them. Most certainly the Church of Christ affords as it were the atmosphere in

which the Spirit of God delights to dwell and spread himself. But then, consider, all these external influences are, and by the very constitution of our nature, can be, only *occasions, opportunities, means*, of spiritual change or spiritual improvement in the heart and will of man—but never *the cause*. It is our peculiar nature, as spiritual beings, persons and not things, that we are, each one in the recesses of his own soul, the originators of our own thoughts, and feelings, and actions, the centre of our own personality; not merely acted on from without, but acting independently, and each according to his idiosyncrasy, by a living energy within. Whence it is that, (even as the wisest philosophers have maintained,) virtue cannot be *taught*—cannot be conveyed from one man to another—cannot be secured by all the assiduities of education, and all the force of discipline. All the influence of our fellow men, whether by instruction, or persuasion, or example, can do no more than furnish the *occasions* and opportunities for the calling up our own inward judgment and feeling and will; which inward judgment and feeling and will is *determined* at last, with reference to the point in hand, not by what is conveyed to us *from without*, but by a work which goes on *within*. Else, just the same outward opportunities would produce just the same inward results, to every one who is subjected to them. The seed sown would in every case produce the same harvest. But this, you know, is not the case. You know that the productiveness of the seed depends, not simply on the quality, or the quantity, of that seed itself; but also on the nature *of the soil into which it falls*. You know that of any given assemblage of Christian worshippers, who join in the same prayers, listen to the same chapters of the Bible, and are instructed by the same voice, in the same truths of religion, not one receives precisely the same impression, and reaps precisely the same fruits from this common opportunity

(so well called a *mean* of grace) with any other one. The *occasion* is afforded *from without*; and that equally to all. But the *improvement* of that occasion will depend on the state and working of the *mind within*; and this is different in each. Now whence this difference in each? To what cause must it be ascribed? What makes you experience a result which your neighbour does not experience? Nay more — what makes you experience a result at one time which you yourself had never experienced from similar words and similar circumstances at any former time? If results are produced from your intercourse with other Christians which, you see at once, cannot be ascribed to them as the efficient cause—any more than you can trace them up to your own nature—then, what is the conclusion, which from pure consideration of the facts of the case must be forced upon you, but this; that this efficient cause must be recognized, not in any thing external to yourself, nor any thing natural to yourself, but in the inworking of the superhuman, and supernatural Spirit of God? Saul had the outward ministrations of Ananias. Saul was with the disciples at Damascus certain days. Yet Saul declares to the Galatians, “I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man; for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the *revelation of Jesus Christ*.” Gal. i. 11, 12.

Besides—consider again. If all our piety comes to us from the instruction, and persuasion, and example, of our fellow-Christians, *whence came that piety in those fellow-Christians themselves*, which impels them to instruct, and persuade, and be an example to, us? If you answer, from their friends and their predecessors; the question recurs, And whence did their friends and their predecessors obtain it? And if you go on repeating the question, and repeating the answer, till you get back to the times of the Apostles, and through them to Jesus, as

the Author of all Christian instruction, and influence; then again the question must be put, But how then came even that instruction and influence, which flowed forth from the Saviour himself, to *work piety in some around him and not in all?*—Whence did it sanctify the Apostles and not the multitude?—Why did it work effectually on the Eleven, and not on the twelfth?—till again you are sent inward to recognize the *cause* of the difference as a something existing *in the mind of the individual*, and you are forced to the conclusion which our Lord himself has inculcated, “No man can come to me, *except the Father which hath sent me draw him.* It is written in the prophets, They shall be all *taught of God;*” (which very prophecies, remember, are prophecies of the gift of *the Holy Ghost;*) “Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned *of the Father*, cometh unto me.” John vi. 44, 45. Without the assumption of an inworking Spirit, in the inner soul, you run along an endless series of effects without a cause. Each man is influenced by another. But who influences the influencer? Paul stirs me up to holiness. But who stirs Paul to stir me? And just, therefore, as reason assures us, (and the argument is admitted to be unanswerable) that there must be *a God in nature*, because there cannot be a series, however long, of effects without a Cause; so equally does reason assure us that there must be *a God in the mind of the believer*, because there cannot be a series, however long, of holy effects, without a holy Cause. And this Cause of all holy effects, this Author of all godliness, this Lord and Giver of all Spiritual life, is God the Holy Ghost. “It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do, of his good pleasure.” Phil. ii. 13. “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations; but it is the same God which worketh all in all.” 1 Cor. xii. 4—6.

But still, while we deprecate all appeal to *sense* on this important truth, and yet can confidently make appeal to *reason*, in its favour, it must not be forgotten that it comes to us as a special truth of revelation, assured to *faith* by the unerring testimony of the word of God.

For its very form, remember, as well as its authority, is supplied to us mainly from this source. It is not of divine influences in general, that we are speaking. It is not of the ordinary presence, even of the Spirit of God. But it is of *His indwelling in the heart of the believer, to supply to him the presence of Christ his Lord*. And as, concerning the supply of that presence, we are dependent on his own assurances; so also concerning the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, as the means of that supply, we are informed with certainty, only by the declarations of his word. In that word, this indwelling is promised as the special gift of Christ—it is recorded as actually possessed by his people—it is spoken of as knowable by their inward consciousness—it is referred to as manifest to outward observation.

That it is *promised as the special gift of Christ* it were almost unnecessary to remind you. For, from the earliest prophets down to our blessed Lord himself, this descent of the Holy Ghost into the hearts of his disciples, is held out as the specific privilege, the distinctive blessing, of Christianity. The Spirit, in his ordinary character, as the communicated Deity, working in all things as the Lord of life, had from the first been recognized. He moved upon the face of the waters, as the source of physical life and light. He came to the sacred poets, and artificers, and heroes of old to be in them the source of mental life—the author of all the wisdom—the skill—the energy, which makes men great. He was breathed into the Saints of God as the source of moral and spiritual life—the

power by which they knew God, served God, enjoyed the presence of God. "He spake" especially "by the Prophets," as the Nicene Creed reminds us. And yet his communication in some more extensive and more peculiar manner, as the distinctive blessing of the times of the Messiah,—this formed the special theme of those very prophets themselves; Ezek. xxxvi. 27; this was proclaimed by the Baptist, as what should be afforded by Jesus to his followers; Matt. iii. 11; this was held out by Jesus himself, as what those followers were to wait for after his departure; John vii. 39; Acts i. 4; and with reference to this—the descent (*i. e.*) of the Holy Ghost in this sense as the communicator to the soul of the believer of the presence of his ascended Lord—St. John expressly says that during the earthly life of Jesus, "the Spirit was not yet given because that Jesus was not yet glorified." John vii. 39. "I will pray the Father," he says himself, "and he shall give you another comforter, even the Spirit of truth,—and *he shall be in you.*" "Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more, but *ye shall see me.*" "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will *manifest myself to him.*" John xiv. 17, 19, 21.

But this indwelling of Christ by his Spirit is, moreover, recorded in Scripture as *actually possessed by his people*. And it is so recorded—say rather assumed—as a well understood fact, on the ground of which the Christian should exhibit an energy, a hope, a purity, which in himself he cannot find. By reference to this possession, St. Paul stirs up the courage of Timothy: "That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by *the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.*" 2 Tim. i. 14. By this, he animates the hope of the Romans: "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received *the Spirit of adoption* whereby we cry Abba Father."

Rom. viii. 15. And by this, he demands of the Corinthians a suitable purity: "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, *which is in you*, which ye have of God?" 1 Cor. vi. 19.

Nor is this indwelling of the Holy Ghost represented as other than *knowable by the believer's own interior consciousness*. Knowable by his workings, though not sensible in himself. Even as the man of genius is conscious of the powers that lie deep within his mind; and the man of wisdom rests serenely on the sense of his resources, without elation and without alarm; so has the man of God a deep yet calm conviction of the Power that dwells within him, and can feel that he is not alone and not unblessed. "There is a *manifestation of the Spirit*;" as St. Paul speaks (1 Cor. xii. 7); that is, an interior consciousness by which he manifests his indwelling; a possession of such gifts of heavenly wisdom, peace, or power, as testify of themselves their divine origin, and prove to us the presence of Him from whom they flow.* "The Spirit himself" says the same Apostle, to the Romans, (viii. 16) "beareth witness along with our spirit;" (that is, by the sense of God's presence, the consciousness of his love which he inspires in us,) "that we are the sons of God." How fully was this consciousness enjoyed, and with what sober majesty avowed, by St. Ignatius, when he replied to the reproaches of the Emperor Trajan, "No one ought to call Theophorus after such a manner, for, *having within me Christ, the heavenly King*, I dissolve all the snares of the devils!" And when to the question, Who is Theophorus? he rejoined, "He who *has Christ in his bosom*." To which when the Emperor scoffingly answered "And dost thou then carry him

* ἡ φανέρωσις τοῦ πνεύματος· dona quibus Spiritus suam præsentiam declarat. BEZA, in Pol. Syn.

who was crucified within thee?" the calm assertion of the aged saint is simply, "Yes I do! for it is written, *I will dwell in them and walk in them!*"

But once more. This indwelling of Christ by his Spirit in the hearts of his people, is referred to as sufficiently *manifest to outward observation*. Manifest, that is, by the appropriate words and deeds to which it prompts; even as the human soul is manifest by its appropriate workings. Paul, for example, says to the Corinthians, (1 Cor. ii. 4) "My speech and my preaching was, not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but *in demonstration of the Spirit*, and of power;" *i. e.* such as evinced to you a superhuman source—were signs, as they were effects, of the divine energy within me. And so similarly he makes appeal to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. i. 4), reminding them that they had certainly been called by God himself, "for our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and *in the Holy Ghost*, and in much assurance;" it was preached to you with all the signs of a divine conviction, boldness, and energy in the Messengers thereof, "even as *ye know* what manner of men we were among you." And the same Apostle exhorts the Corinthians so to exercise in their assemblies their nobler and more edifying gifts that, "if one that believeth not, or is unlearned, come in, the secrets of his heart may be made manifest, and falling down on his face, he may worship God, and report that *God is in you* of a truth." 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.

And let us not close this chapter, then, without the personal inquiry, Have I this indwelling of the Spirit? Christ, when he promises it, indicates two essential conditions of its possession:—"If *ye love me, keep my commandments*, and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Com-

forter, even the Spirit of truth, *whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him.*" John xiv. 15—17. You need, you see, in order to the experience of this Office of the Holy Ghost in your soul, that *Faith*, by which its possessor is distinguished from the world; and that *loving Obedience* by which he keeps very close to Him in whom he believes. The promise is manifestly not to a body of men, but to *a class of minds*. The communication of the Holy Ghost to *dwell in* a follower of Christ, is limited by conditions which do not apply to the outward presence and teaching even of the Saviour himself. *All* the Apostles Jesus could be *with*. To *all*, even to Judas, he could teach the truths of God. *All* he could use for his messengers, and employ externally in his work. But *not to all* does he promise that he will be *in* them. It is only such as are united to him by a living and loving faith, that he can actuate by his indwelling Spirit, and use as his agents to carry on his work. John xv. 1—8. Men may belong to Christ and yet not possess the Spirit of Christ. The Romans are saluted as "beloved of God, called to be saints, the called of Jesus Christ;" and yet it is said to them, "If any man *have not the Spirit of Christ*, he is none of his!" The Corinthians are addressed as "the church of God, sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints," and yet they are warned that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Nay and they are expressly told, "I brethren, *could not speak unto you as unto spiritual*, but as unto carnal;—for whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"

And hence then, I repeat, how needful the inquiry, Have *I individually* this indwelling of the Spirit? Is his office of Communicator of Christ's presence fulfilled in me? I must

not take it for granted ; I must examine into it. I must not assume it ; I must have good proofs of it. And what are good proofs of it but just those “ holy desires, good counsels, and just works ” which flow from such indwelling ; the sentiments which we cherish—the dispositions which we exercise—the character which we exhibit to the world ? Remember that the Spirit, as dwelling in the heart of the believer, is very rarely spoken of *absolutely* ; but most generally *with a genitive added*, expressive of *the particular disposition*, by which he manifests his presence. He is in us, if in us at all, as the Spirit of *adoption*, *i. e.* of childlike freedom towards our heavenly Father—as the Spirit of *wisdom*, *i. e.* of insight into spiritual truth—as the Spirit of *meekness*—as the Spirit of *love*—as the Spirit of *faith*—as the Spirit of *hope*—above all, and including all, as the Spirit of *Jesus Christ* (Phil. i. 19) ; working in us the same mind which was in him ; and making us as he was in this world. Take then these epithets in all their extent ; and examine yourself, by these not obscure and mystical but most intelligible signs, what spirit you are of. “ Hereby know we that we dwell in God, and God in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.” “ And hereby we know that Christ abideth in us, *by the Spirit which he hath given us.*”

CHAPTER III.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY GHOST.

THE CHURCH, THE SPHERE OF THE SPIRIT'S OPERATION.

HAVING now considered the Nature, and the Office, of the Holy Ghost, the third particular to which our Creed directs us is his WORK ;—the grace and power which he exercises in the fulfilment of the Office assigned to him, as the Manifester of Christ to the hearts of his people.

For the remaining articles of the Apostles' Creed, bring before us topics, not distinct and separable from that of the Holy Ghost, but intimately and essentially connected with His Office ; and declare, in fact, the chief particulars of the Work which in fulfilment of that Office he executes. In the article "the Holy Catholic Church" we have indicated to us the sphere in which the Holy Ghost carries on his work ; and in the articles, "the Communion of Saints ; the Forgiveness of Sins ; and the Resurrection of the body to life everlasting," we have the topics which excite those three fundamental dispositions of Love, and Faith, and Hope, in forming and sustaining which, that work itself consists.

We enter, in this Chapter, on the consideration of THE SPHERE in which the Holy Ghost carries on his Work as the Vicegerent of Christ. This is declared to us in the article, "THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH."

For by "the Church" is meant the aggregate sum of those who have been called out from the darkness of Heathenism,

and the dimness of Judaism, to constitute the body of Christ, in which he, by his Spirit, dwells and works. "God hath given him" says St. Paul, "to be head over all things to *the church*, which is *his body*, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Eph. i. 22, 23. And this church, therefore, forms the sphere of the Spirit's operation as the representative, and communicator of the presence and life of Christ. It is as the body which he animates; (1 Cor. xii)—as the temple in which he dwells. "There is one body, and *one Spirit*." Eph. iv. 4. And again, "The *house* of God, which is the church of the living God." 1 Tim. iii. 15. And again, "Know ye not that ye are the *temple* of God, and that the *Spirit of God dwelleth in you*?" 1 Cor. iii. 16. In both which latter passages the allusion is plain to the presence of God amongst his people Israel by means of the mystic glory which dwelt between the cherubim in the Temple, and consecrated it as the Palace of the Most High. "It came to pass" says the sacred chronicler (2 Chron. v. 13, 14) "when they lifted up their voice and praised the Lord, that then the house was filled with a cloud," (that bright cloud, namely, of roseate splendour which had hovered over the tabernacle in the wilderness, as the symbol of God's presence; and which was seen again by the disciples at the transfiguration of their Lord, when "a bright cloud overshadowed him;" and which, therefore, is so frequently called "the *glory*" or splendour "of the Lord")—"even the house of the Lord. So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud;" (its dazzling brilliancy) "for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God."

Now, what the Temple was to Jehovah, that is the Christian Church to the Son of God. It is the sacred sphere in which he manifests his presence. And what that divine glory was to the Temple, that is the Holy Ghost to the Church—

the mystic medium through which that presence is diffused throughout the spiritual house of God. "Ye" says St. Paul to the Ephesians, "are of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto *an holy temple* in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together *for an habitation of God* THROUGH THE SPIRIT." Eph. ii. 19—22.

The Sphere, then, of the Holy Ghost's operations, is the whole body of the elect people of God, "the sanctified by God the Father, and saved in Christ Jesus, and called," considered as the spiritual temple of the Lord; the body of Christ; the congregation of his redeemed. And hence it is called his "Church;" or body of "called ones," consecrated to himself. Such a "church," Jesus himself designed and provided for, while on earth. Such a "church," was formed by his Apostles in Jerusalem. Such a "church" was subsequently organized in each of the several cities where believers were added to the Lord. And the aggregate or sum of all such "churches," beginning with the one at Jerusalem, and afterwards spread over the face of the earth, is what we commemorate in our Creed as "the holy, catholic, Church;" and in our Liturgy as "the holy church universal;" and in our Communion service as "the mystical body of God's Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people."

Let us give attention to these particulars in detail.

The doctrine which they include may be reduced to the following propositions:

First, That our blessed Lord not only called to himself disciples; but he designed that they should constitute, on his departure, a distinct and organized community of men.

Secondly, That such a community was, accordingly, actually

formed by the Apostles, in Jerusalem, under their jurisdiction.

Thirdly, That as the Gospel spread throughout Judæa, and into other lands, other communities were formed on the same principles, and for the same ends.

Fourthly, That the aggregate or sum of such communities of professing Christians, contemplated abstractedly as an ideal whole, under the presidency of Jesus as its Head, is called in Scripture "The Church," and in the Apostle's Creed "The Catholic," (or universal) "Church."

Fifthly, That the end for which our Lord designed the existence of these Communities, called, as an ideal whole, his Church, was the more effectual communication of Himself, by his Spirit, to all the members of the same. Or, as our Catechism phrases it, was, "the sanctifying all the elect people of God." With reference to which end, as well as to the sacred relation of this community to its unseen Lord, this body is called "the *holy* Catholic Church."

First, then, I would show you, *That our blessed Lord not only called to himself disciples ; but designed that they should constitute, on his departure, a distinct, organized, community of men.*

For Jesus came to be not merely a Teacher of religious principles, but *the Head and Ruler of a religious people*. Not merely to throw out fundamental truths, but to *collect a body of lovers of truth*. Not merely to die for the reconciliation of the world, but to consecrate those who should embrace this reconciliation as a people holy to the Lord. The prophets who speak of the Messiah exhibit him not merely as a Prophet, to teach—no, nor as a Priest, to make atonement—but as a King, to govern, guide, and discipline. And in exact accordance with these predictions we find Jesus, from the first, col-

lecting followers, who by baptism were separated off and consecrated to himself (John iii. 22, 26 : iv. 1); nay, and solemnly affirming, as in the case of Nicodemus, that it was not enough for any one to receive the truths he taught; and acknowledge generally that he was “a teacher come from God;” but that unless he were “born *of water* as well as of the Spirit,” came out openly and joined himself, by public dedication, to the little band of his avowed disciples, “he could not enter into the kingdom of God.” John iii. 5. And such a band of men, thus marked out and distinguished as a special body of followers, he calls his “flock” (Luke xii. 32); and cheers them by denominating himself their “Shepherd;” *i. e.* their Head and Ruler (John 10, 11); and by declaring that “other sheep he has which are not of this fold, and them also he must bring, and they shall hear his voice, and there shall be *one fold under one Shepherd.*” John x. 16.

Nor is this unity, which Jesus intimates by this figure, merely that of mind and heart. It is manifestly one of externally acknowledged brotherhood; as a connected whole, whose character could be observed and appreciated by the world around. For what is His parting prayer for his disciples, thus collected into union with him? “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that *they all may be one*; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us; *that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*” John xvii. 20, 21. Observe, there was to be among his followers a unity so *outwardly manifested*, that the world should *mark* this body as a distinct community, visibly differenced from themselves, and from their spirit and conduct should be led to recognize the divine Authority and Mission of their unseen Head. Even as Jesus intimates in another place, when he compares his followers not merely to salt which was to diffuse its purifying

freshness through the earth, but to "*a city set upon a hill, which cannot be hid.*" Matt. v. 14.

Nor is this all. Our Lord contemplates his disciples, not only as publicly consecrated to his service; and manifestly distinguished from the world around them; but as *acting in concert, as an organized community*, with reference to their own internal affairs. Their disputes among themselves were to be settled, when private means had failed, not by appeal to the Jewish, or heathen, courts of justice, but *by reference to their brethren, assembled as a body*; and *as a body arbitrating on the cause* proposed to them; which arbitration made by *the Community*, has the promise of *Christ's presence*, and *Christ's ratification*, as the efficient, though invisible, head thereof. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, *tell it unto the Church*;"* the general assembly of the brethren as a body; "and verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye" (thus acting as a body) "shall bind

* We see here the intention of Jesus, that his churches should form themselves after the pattern of the Jewish Synagogues. For before those assemblies were brought charges of thefts, and other petty offences, and according to their arbitration disputes were decided. See Horne, iii. 246, and Lightfoot, in loc. The object of Jesus, in directing these three stages of proceeding, 1) private remonstrance; 2) social discussion; and 3) public appeal; is obviously to prevent an injured person from judging and acting according to the impulse of his own excited feelings. The *sensations* of the individual are subjected to the *common sense* of the community. St. Paul censures the Corinthians for not fulfilling these injunctions of the Lord, and settling their differences by the arbitration of the church. 1 Cor. vi. 1—5. The whole constitution of the Christian Communities was evidently modelled, *not after the Levitical polity*, but after *the Synagogue*; which very word St. James uses for a Christian assembly. Jam. ii. 2. See RIDDLE, *Christ. Antiq.* 139.

on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven"—your decision on the points submitted to you shall have the force of my authority;—for "where even two or three are gathered together in my name," that is, as my disciples, as constituting a body of which I am the head, to deliberate and decide according to my will, "there am I in the midst of them." Matt. xviii. 15—25.

And therefore, further, for this flock thus contemplated as a distinct and organized community, our Lord provided, even in his life-time, *authorized Rulers*, as his representatives, who should be as it were the managing Directors of the Society, and the executive of his will therein. For he chose out his twelve Apostles, not merely to be the repositories of his principles, and as stewards to dispense them to their brethren, and through the world; (Matt. xiii. 51, 52) but also to be *the governors* of those who by their preaching should be collected into the Society of Christ. This he intimates to them when he says, "Who then is that faithful and wise servant whom his Lord hath *made ruler over his household*, to give them meat in due season?" Matt. xxiv. 45. The responsibility resulting from this he warns them of, in the parable of the talents; which are entrusted to the *body servants* of the household. Matt. xxv. 14—29. And for this he solemnly ordains and qualifies them, when he says, after his resurrection, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain they are retained." John xx. 22, 23.

But again. Lest these appointed Rulers should be tempted to consider themselves lords over God's heritage, and forget that *Jesus only* is the proper Head of his Society, their Master, in another place, forbids their assumption of a *personal authority* over their brethren, and reserves most jealously the Su-

preme control to Himself alone. "Be not ye called Rabbi;" he says, "for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. Neither be ye called Masters, for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest amongst you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Matt. xxiii. 8—12. And further, to remind them that all they teach and do in this capacity has authority only so far as they speak and act in the name, and by the Spirit, of their Master, he assures them that only as they "*abide in him and his words abide in them*" can they fulfil their office with success. "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for *without me ye can do nothing*." John xv. 5. Nay, and the very passage which intimates the authority thus delegated to these Apostles, has appended to it a most awful warning against the abuse, by personal assumptions, of that authority. "But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and *shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites!* There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth!" Matt. xxiv. 48—51.

Yet further. You will find that to such a Community, thus collected together, organized, and officered, but still kept under the exclusive supremacy of the Lord himself, Jesus promises, not substantiality merely, and visibility, but also *permanency*; —a permanency which should endure when the individual members of which it was in that first age composed, should have passed away; an *historical existence*, therefore, like that of a state and nation, which, while its component parts are con-

stantly changing, remains, as to its social constitution, from age to age, the same. For this is the meaning of that promise to St. Peter; (Matt. xvi. 18) "I say also unto thee, thou art Peter, and on this rock I will *build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*" That is, the Community which I will found through your preaching, on the day of Pentecost, *shall stand amidst the lapse of ages*, unshaken by the ravages which Death shall make on its particular, successive, members. To ratify which promise, and to provide for its fulfilment, the Lord vouchsafes his parting assurance, "I am with you alway, even to the end of the world!" Matt. xxviii. 20.

And consequently, as the last particular essential to a society so constituted to endure through successive generations of mankind, our Lord distinctly provided and enjoined *specific, public, solemn, ordinances*;—the one, of admission into fellowship with this Community, by which the number of its members might be, as it were, recruited from time to time; and the other of Social Union and Communion, by which the relation of those members to each other and to their invisible Head, might be kept up. "Go ye," he said, "and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matt. xxviii. 19. "This bread" he declared at his last Supper, "is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me." And again, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke xxii. 19, 20); substituting thereby, for the paschal festival, which commemorated God's entering into covenant with his ancient people, and constituting them a ransomed, free, and sacred nation, the memorial of a *new* covenant ratified by his death, by which God constituted the disciples of his Son a new nation of redeemed ones, a people holy to the Lord.

See then how carefully your Lord has kept in view not only the salvation of the individual soul, but the formation of a distinct community of men, in which, and by means of which, this salvation of the individual should be carried on. Personal religion, secret piety, you cannot, it is true, too highly prize. But personal religion, secret piety, is not the whole of that to which you are called. Yea rather, personal religion cannot unfold itself but in the social sphere; and secret piety must be stunted, dwarfed, imperfect, and unshapely in its growth, without the sympathies, the helps, the exercises, the manifold influences of public union and communion with our fellow Christians, as joint members of one body, under one exalted Head. "No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." As surely as Christ has called you into living union with himself, he has called you into living union with his people—and for those people, their purity, their holiness, their prosperity, their multiplication, he would have you to be zealous even as you are zealous for your own soul. "For as the body is one though it hath many members, and all the members of that one body, though many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit—that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another; and whether one member suffer, all the members may suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members may rejoice with it." 1 Cor. xii.

And now then let us pass on to the second proposition: which is this: That *such a community as our Lord designed, was accordingly, actually formed by the Apostles in Jerusalem.*

The Idea which their Lord had unveiled to them, they kept

before their eyes, and sought to realize in act. Immediately on their recovery from the stupor into which his unexpected death had thrown them, we find the disciples "assembling together" as a little band of brethren, and Jesus himself honouring their "church" or fraternal assembly, by coming into the midst of them and saying, "Peace be unto you!" John xx. 19. After his ascension, again, you see the disciples "continuing with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." Acts i. 14. And you read moreover of their exercising, as such a body, not merely devotional fellowship, but the important functions of self-organization. For in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, (their number was about an hundred and twenty) and having announced the defection and death of Judas, proposed to them the filling up his place in the Society, and the appointing from among their number one to take part of that ministry and apostleship which Jesus had entrusted to his personal friends and followers; the testifying, namely, to his resurrection. Which therefore, they, with special prayer to the Lord himself, as their only Head, invisibly among them, and directing their decisions, did. And thus Matthias was elected into the number of the special witnesses of Jesus, and "was numbered with the eleven Apostles." Here are all the elements of a community, distinct, united, deliberative, self-organizing, according to the design of Christ.

But further, they failed not to exercise in this community the power conceded to them by their Lord (John xx. 23) of remitting sins; that is, of receiving into the number of "the saved ones" whose sins are blotted out by the blood of Christ, those whom they judged to be truly penitent, and in earnest to save themselves from the world around them. For when the day of Pentecost was come, and they received the promised Spirit, who descended on them when they were "all with one

accord in one place," to fulfil to them his great office as the Life-communicator to the body of Christ,—and when by the energy of that Spirit they had proclaimed their Master's glory, and become the instruments thereby of pricking many to the heart, what is the very first direction that St. Peter gives to the awakened multitude when they cried out saying, Men and brethren, what shall we do? "Repent, and *be baptized*, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, *for the remission of sins*." Not only, "Repent," observe, which was needful for their personal deliverance from the impending wrath; but, "*Repent and be baptized*"—unite yourselves by a solemn, public, ordinance to our Society; take the sacramental oath of enlistment in our little band of followers of Jesus; and thus distinguishing yourselves from the untoward generation round you, step into the sacred sphere of God's own "saved ones," wherein there is remission of sins, by the blood of Christ, and peace, and joy, and hope through the gift of the Holy Ghost. "And they that gladly received the word were baptized; and the same day there were added to them," *i. e.* to the Community of Christians already organized, "about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and *fellowship*"—not doctrine, merely, feeding on the truths they taught; but also *fellowship*, acting as lively members of the community over which they ruled—"and in breaking of bread and in prayers"—in the participation, with that community, of those social meals of brotherly affection at which the whole body of the faithful gratefully commemorated the death and passion of their Head. Here, then, are all the elements of those sacramental distinctions by which the entrance into, and continuance with, the brotherhood of Christ were both effected and proclaimed.

Nor is this all. If you go on through the notices which St. Luke has preserved to us, of this first church, the Apostolic

church, at Jerusalem, you will find it exercising all the functions which belong to an organized religious Society, and both cherishing the inspirations, exhibiting the graces, submitting to the authority, and diffusing abroad the presence and power, of that Spirit of God, who in the midst of that Society, as in his proper sphere of operation, vouchsafed to dwell.

How they *cherished his inspirations* by social, common, prayer! When the Apostles had been dismissed with threats from the Council, what was their refuge? whence did they seek for consolation and strength? “Being let go, they *went to their own company*, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.” They felt they were not isolated believers—they were constituent elements of a body, the members of which cared for each other, and in the assemblies of which the Holy Ghost was promised to dwell with a light and life, far beyond his manifestations to the solitary soul; and therefore *to this body* they took their way, and *with this body* sought for grace and power from above. Nor did this body fail to sympathize with their difficulty and their danger. “When they heard that, *they lifted up their voice to God with one accord*”—they reminded him of his promises to his people assembled in his name—and they implored that he would grant to his servants—(how touching that intercessory supplication for their leaders who had stepped out foremost in the battle!)—“that with all boldness they might speak his word!” And what was the result? The Holy Ghost was present in his sanctuary, and he wrought his work. “*When they had prayed*, the place was shaken *where they had assembled together*; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness!” Acts iv. 23—31.

Then, how they *exhibited the graces* of the Holy Ghost, in all the forms of brotherly affection and good will. The Holy

Ghost is the Spirit of love—of community of feeling—of looking not at our own interests, but at the interests of others. And by this we know that Christ dwelleth in us, if this Spirit be given to us. And how fully was this Spirit displayed in that first church! “All that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men as every man had need.” Acts ii. 44, 45. And again, “The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that aught of the things which they possessed was their own, but they had all things common.” Acts iv. 32. What a thorough realization of the Lord's own design, his own most earnest prayer, for the community of his disciples!—“that they all may be one; as thou Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me!” And what a fulfilment therewith of that further end for which he ordained his church, and which he in that last sentence prays for, the bearing witness to him in the world; the shining as a light upon the earth to shed abroad in it the radiance of his glory. “They, continuing daily *with one accord* in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and *having favour with all the people.*” Acts ii. 46, 47.

Nor are we less struck with the *submission* of this primitive community to the *authority* of the Holy Ghost. For that Awful Being is a Spirit of Order as well as love, of power as well as grace. And but a short time elapsed before it was seen how needful was the *discipline* which the Lord intended should be exercised in his church; how awful was the authority which he had devolved on his Apostles as its rulers when he empowered them “to bind and loose;” to establish in it regulations of permission and of prohibition, and to maintain

its sanctity by a salutary rigour. You come next to the awful story of Ananias and Sapphira;—you find that with reference to the “having all things common” there was no rule imposed; that each might give or might retain the whole or any part of his possessions as he was disposed in his heart;—but that these two individuals, from an ostentatious hypocrisy, professed a liberality which they had not exerted, and sought to deceive the church of God. Then is it seen that the Holy Ghost is truly ruling in that church as the Vicerent of Christ. Then does the Apostle of the Lord accuse the guilty pair before the brethren, as “having agreed together to *tempt the Spirit of the Lord.*” Then does he charge them, “Ye have not lied unto men, but *unto God!*” And his words have power—his sentence is confirmed by the divine will—the sins that he retains, they are retained,—what he binds on earth is bound in heaven,—“they fell down and gave up the ghost!” “And *great fear came upon all the church*”—the presence of the Spirit among them was reverently recognized—the exercise of the discipline they needed was devoutly submitted to—they felt that they were, not only a community, but a community under the awful presidency of the Holy Ghost.

Yet not less manifest is their affectionate *zeal* than their obedient awe—their efforts for the edification, than their submission to the discipline, of the church of Christ. Observe, once more, their diligence to *diffuse abroad the presence and power* of the Holy Ghost, both among themselves, and far beyond the confines of their community. There soon arise, as the body becomes enlarged, practical difficulties of administration. The Apostles are unequal to the task of regulating the affairs of the complex society. And what therefore do they do? They call on that society to exercise its function of self-regulation, and select for them assistants in their work.

“When the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring among the Grecians” (the converts from among the Hellenistic Jews) “against the Hebrews; because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve *called the multitude of the disciples* unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, *look ye out among you* seven men of honest report, *full of the Holy Ghost*, and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. And the saying pleased the whole multitude, ‘and they chose the seven deacons,’ whom they set before the Apostles, and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.” What more thorough organization, what more palpable marks of a living church, animated by a life-giving Spirit, can we find than here? It is ready for each emergency as it arises—it enlarges its means of edification according to its necessities—it modifies its constitution according to its circumstances—it has not yet become petrified into a lifeless rigidity which does but preserve the lineaments of the past; it is still breathing with a vital energy which takes its outward form and pressure from the present. The Holy Ghost is there. He is in the centre of the assembled disciples. He is in the heart of the individuals who compose that assembly. And men *full of the Holy Ghost* and of wisdom are found, and chosen, and set apart. And thus the Church is not only edified but enlarged—the Spirit of God is breathed with fuller vigour not only through the members of the sacred body, but forth into the wastes of the unconverted world. “The word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient unto the faith.” Acts vi. 1—7.

Such was the primitive, Apostolic Church;—the Sphere of

operation of the Holy Ghost. O that we did not seem, in all this, to be painting a fancy picture, rather than portraying the features of what was designed to be, what actually was, the constitution and endowments of the first community of Christ's people! But why should this seem strange to us? What is there in our modern relations to prevent our acting out the *principles*, at least, with whatever difference of form, which wrought so effectually in that first community? True, we have no longer Apostles for rulers—inspiration for guidance—miraculous power for discipline; true, we are not a little band collected in a single locality, and easily known to each other; true, we have not the first fresh impulses of the Spirit of truth, and earnestness, and love in all our members; and all these differences must greatly modify the application of this first example of a Christian Church to ourselves. But still the *Idea* remains to be worked out by us. The essential elements of its constitution should be also the elements of ours. Nay, and they are so. In our own particular community, the Church of England, they are so. And we have only to realize her principles and be animated by her spirit, to approximate very closely to that Apostolic pattern.

For, is one feature of that community its spirit of social piety and common prayer? We have provided for us a public liturgy, which the happy experience of many who use it will testify to be indeed a blessed means of becoming "filled with the Holy Ghost."

Are solemn rites of initiation into, and communion with, the brethren in Christ, essential elements of a church? These too, and just the same which Christ himself appointed, are furnished us in Holy Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

Were brotherly love, and charity, so remarkable in that primitive community? Our Church also has made it an integral portion of her Eucharistic service that we should minister

to the necessities of the saints, that distribution may be made to all men according to their need.

And is church order and ministerial authority a plain mark of the Apostolic constitution ? This too is provided for us by the ordination of sacred officers as spiritual Guides and Rulers of the flock ; and the entrusting to them the presidency in our public assemblies.

While, on the other hand, do you see in the first Church, at Jerusalem, the zealous co-operation of all, according to their gifts and opportunities, for the edification and enlargement of the body of which they were essential living members ? We too are taught in our Homily for Whit Sunday that “the Holy Ghost openeth the mouth to declare the mighty works of God, engendereth a burning zeal towards God’s word, and giveth ALL MEN a tongue, yea and a fiery tongue, so that they may boldly and cheerfully profess the truth in the face of the whole world.” We too are bid to pray, in our collect for Good Friday, “for *all estates of men* in Christ’s holy church, that *every member of the same*, in his vocation and ministry, may truly and godly serve him.” And we, too, are encouraged to ask in our collect for St. Barnabas’ day, “O Lord, who didst endue the Apostle Barnabas with singular *gifts of the Holy Ghost*, leave us not, we beseech thee, destitute of thy manifold gifts, nor yet of grace to use them always to thy honour and glory !”

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHURCH, CATHOLIC.

THE office of the Holy Ghost is to supply the place and presence of Christ himself to his disciples. And consequently the sphere in which he executes this office,—that is, the sphere of the Holy Ghost's operations—must comprehend all the followers of Christ, in every place, and through every age. And it is just this sphere, comprising all the followers of Christ in every place, and through every age, which, looked upon as an ideal whole, is called in the Creed “The Holy Catholic Church.”

Now, in seeking to develope the conceptions contained in this denomination of the sphere of the Holy Ghost's operations, we have seen—

First, that our blessed Lord not only called to himself disciples, but designed that they should constitute, on his departure, a distinct and organized Community.

And Secondly, That such a Community was, accordingly, actually formed by the Apostles, in Jerusalem, under their jurisdiction.

The next step in our present investigation, to which I call your attention is this:—

Thirdly, that *as the Gospel spread throughout Judæa, and into other lands, other Communities were formed on the same principles, and for the same ends.*

All that we have hitherto said has been not concerning *The*

Church, as the universal family of Christ's people, but only concerning A Church—a particular society of converts, living together, and maintaining personal intercourse with each other, in a particular spot. Jesus designed that those who followed him during his lifetime (and that, apparently, not steadily, as a constant body of attendants, but only as occasion served) should, after his departure, come together, and enter into close relation with each other as one body, under the superintendence of those Eleven more intimate friends, to whom he had specially explained his doctrine, and whom he had specially commissioned to spread that doctrine among their fellow-men. And accordingly, those Apostles being assembled together, with their Master, just before his ascension, he commanded them “that they should not depart from Jerusalem”—not scatter themselves abroad again, returning to their private homes and occupations, in Galilee, and elsewhere,—“but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.” Acts i. 4. And to these men, thus forming the nucleus of an organized body of believers, there were soon united others of the personal followers of Jesus, “the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brethren;” and these together constituted A Church—the first Community of Christians—the particular Church, which, swelled as it was by a vast influx of converts from the day of Pentecost onward, is called specifically by the sacred historian, “The Church *which was at Jerusalem.*” Acts viii. 1. Here was a primary instance and specimen of the sort of society into which Jesus designed his disciples to form themselves, in order to the nourishment and the diffusion of the spirit of piety—the seeking for themselves and the communicating to others that indwelling of the Holy Ghost, which their Lord had promised as the substitute for his personal teaching and care.

And such a *communication to others* of this blessed Spirit soon

takes place. A communication, remember, which led, not merely to the enlargement of the particular Church at Jerusalem, but to the formation of *new churches in other places, on the same principles, and for the same ends*. For not only, through the signs and wonders exhibited by the Apostles, and through the preaching of the word of God, were “believers the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women” (Acts v. 14), “and the number of the disciples multiplied *in Jerusalem* greatly, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith” (Acts vi. 7), but it pleased God by his co-operating providence to scatter the seeds which had been thus copiously gathered into this first granary of the Lord, that they might fall upon and fructify other places in other lands. There soon arose “a great persecution against the Church which was at Jerusalem;” and this persecution, while it disturbed, and almost broke up, that particular community, was made the occasion of giving rise to other communities like it; and producing, instead of one church, many churches in the earth. “They were all scattered abroad,” says St. Luke, “throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the Apostles;” “and they that were scattered abroad *went every where preaching the word*.” Acts viii. 1, 4. And in this way, if you go through the narrative from the 8th to the 15th chapter of the Acts, you will find that there were founded other churches *distinct from that of Jerusalem*, though in communication with it. For first, you read that in the city of Samaria, when Philip the deacon had “preached the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they that believed *were baptized, both men and women*.” Acts viii. 12. And then, that the same Philip, passing through the land of Judæa “*preached in all the cities till he came to Cesarea*.” Acts viii. 40. Next

you find that when Saul went to Damascus there were disciples there, "with whom," that is, in whose company as a religious society, "he tarried certain days." Acts ix. 19. And when you come down to the 31st verse of chapter ix. you find St. Luke speaking very largely of "*The Churches throughout all Judæa and Galilee, and Samaria,*" which "*were edified,*" *i. e.* built up, consolidated, organized,* "and walking in the fear of the Lord, and *in the comfort of the Holy Ghost,* were multiplied;" that is, exercising themselves in the worship and obedience of God, and being animated by the teaching and exhortations of their spiritual teachers, both enjoyed for themselves and diffused abroad to others, the life-giving power of the Holy Ghost; so that they *made additions, each to its own particular body, in its own particular place,* of new members gathered from the world around them. So again, yet further on (Acts xi. 19), you find that "they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch" (far beyond the confines of Judea) "preaching the word;" though at first to none but Jews only. But soon these zealous missionaries spread the word of the Lord beyond the bounds not only of Judea, but of Judaism, and there was formed, through their *independent instrumentality,* the first Church, or Community of Christian converts, from *the Gentile world.*†

* Οἰκοδομοῦμεναι Cf. 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5: "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, ye also, as lively stones, are built up, (οἰκοδομεῖσθε) a spiritual house."

† How important is the remark of Neander on this event! "Thus were they the means of actualizing what the enlightened Stephen had already recognized as a fundamental principle; the grand Idea, to which he (mainly) became a martyr. But now that in this way, *altogether independently of the Apostles in Judæa,* and of the developement of Christianity according to the Jewish type, churches were formed of purely hellenistic materials, which freed themselves entirely from Judaism;—and still more when Paul came forward,

“For some of them” continues St. Luke, v. 20, 21, “were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spoke unto *the Grecians*,” the Gentiles,* “preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord.” And then Barnabas was sent down to them from “the church which was in Jerusalem” (as St. Luke again denominates the first Christian Society v. 22); and afterwards he sought for Saul and brought him to Antioch; “and it came to pass that a whole year *they assembled themselves with the church*,” in that place, “and taught much people.” Which church at Antioch, thus organized, in addition to the Church at Jerusalem, became itself, like that original Community, *an administrator of its own discipline, and the centre of its own operations*; as you see plainly in the 13th chapter, where we read that “there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod, and Saul; and as they ministered unto the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them: and when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away;” *i. e.* to be *Missionaries from that Church* to the

and carried out and confirmed these distinctive principles;—it might well have happened that the earlier Apostles would assert so much the more determinately and rigidly their existing views, in opposition to this new course of things; and thus by the triumph of a human particularism among the first teachers of the Gospel, an irreconcilable difference might have been produced. But this destructive result, by which the self-seeking and one-sided views of men would have destroyed the unity of the work of God, was warded off by the watchful influence of the Holy Ghost, which suffered not *differences to grow into divisions*, but had power to preserve *Unity in the midst of variety*.”—GESCHICHTE der Pflanzung der Christl. Kirche, i. 83.

* “Ελληνες is, according to Griesbach and the best critics, the true reading.

heathen world. Which commission, moreover, Paul and Barnabas having fulfilled, by going about to Seleucia, and Cyprus, and Pamphylia, and Pisidia, and Lycaonia, and Attalia, and ordaining elders in every *new church* constituted by them in those countries (xiv. 23); they “sailed thence” (we are told, xiv. 26, 27), “to Antioch, *from whence they had been recommended* to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled; and when they were come, and *had gathered the church together*, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.”

Thus then you learn, how, as opportunity was afforded, by God’s providence, for spreading the Gospel through Judea and into heathen lands, other Communities, or Societies of Christians were formed, on the same principles and for the same ends with that first Community, that Model School as it were, which the Apostles had established in Jerusalem. So that the whole multitude of Christians, who were at first comprehended within the narrow limits of the Sacred City; and concerning whom St. Luke says (ii. 47) “the Lord added to the *church*” *i. e.* the single body of disciples at Jerusalem, “daily, such as should be saved;” soon began to be spoken of as spread through many distinct Societies. Whence St. Luke speaks of “the *churches* throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria” (Acts ix. 31); and St. Paul of “the *churches* of God which in Judea,” (distinct fraternities even in one and the same region!) “were in Christ Jesus” (1 Thess. ii. 14); and again, when he says to the Romans, “to whom *all the churches of the Gentiles* give thanks.” Rom. xvi. 4. Nay and in this same chapter (v. 16), though writing from only a single city, Corinth, he adds, “the *churches* of Christ salute you.” The grand Idea, which had been placed before the Apostles by our blessed Lord, and the first working of which was exhibited among the Christians of Jerusalem, was acted upon wherever a

number of men were turned to the Lord; and everywhere, not only truth was preached, and individual souls were saved, but *organized communities* were formed, connected with each other not by artificial outward ties, but by inward sympathy of principle and object—not by an enforced uniformity but by a spontaneous unanimity—not by means of a *subordination* established by authority, but by means of a *co-ordination* kept up by mutual reverence and love; related to each other, not so much as *daughter* churches, but rather as *sister* communities, in the Lord. I beg you to mark this fact, which has unfolded itself so clearly as we have gone on through the sacred annals; for it strikes at the very root of that despotic authority which the one particular church of Rome claims for herself over all other Christian communities, as the Mother and Mistress of them all. “Mother and Mistress!” Terms ill-assorted, and bringing into conjunction the two incompatible notions of free affection, and constrained submission! Even were she the *Mother* of all; that is, if all the more modern churches had been formed as she asserts, by the instrumentality of missionaries going forth from her bosom; she would not therefore be the *Mistress* of those churches—no, not were she herself still pure. She could properly claim no connexion with them but that of sisterly correspondence and consultation. She could not constitute herself the centre of their movements; but could only move in harmony with them, as co-satellites around the only *Sun*, in the Christian firmament, the Lord Jesus Christ! The Church of Antioch was the daughter of the Church of Jerusalem, just in this sense that fugitives from the persecution there, were the first who carried to the heathen city the seeds of the Gospel. But the church at Antioch was not therefore *subject* to the church at Jerusalem. But on the contrary, when certain men came down from that church and taught the brethren in

Antioch, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses ye cannot be saved," that church itself "after no small dissension and disputation with them," determined to send Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them as their representatives, to argue this question with the Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem. Acts xv. 1, 2. Which mission of those deputies, St. Paul most carefully and explicitly tells us in his letter to the Galatians, was undertaken not in obedience to any summons received from the Jerusalem Church; or from any necessity under which the brethren at Antioch felt themselves, to submit to the authority of that Church; but, "I went up," he says, "*by revelation*" (*i. e.* by the suggestion of the Spirit deciding my own personal judgment of the course to be pursued), "and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles;—and that because of false brethren, unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out *our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus*, that they might bring us into bondage." Observe, he went up, not to submit himself to bondage, but to protest against every attempt by a party in the church at Jerusalem to bring them into bondage; "to whom," he adds, "we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour! that the truth of the gospel might continue with you!" In a word, the one great principle on which the Gospel was spread abroad, was not the *overgrowth* but the *propagation by sets*, of the First Community; not the swelling of one particular church into an unwieldy monarchy, attempting to *govern*, where it could not *benefit*, and to enforce ecclesiastical conformity where there could not be personal communion; but *the multiplication of similar bodies*, in co-ordinate spheres, each one nourishing its own life, and regulating its own interior concerns, though all united *by their common relation* to one common centre—the Head of their confederation—the President of these independent yet united

states,—the holding of whose *truth*, and the participation of whose *Spirit*, was the condition, as of the individual life of each society, so also of the common unity of all.* “To the church of God, which is at Corinth;” writes St. Paul, “to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, *with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord*, both theirs and ours.” 1 Cor. i. 2. “These things saith HE,” says the divine, sole Monarch himself, “that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;—he that hath an ear, let him hear what THE SPIRIT saith unto the churches!” Rev. ii. 1, 7. “And *all the churches* shall know that I am HE which searcheth the reins and hearts.” Rev. ii. 23. “Him”—him alone—“God gave to be *the Head over all things* to the church, which is his body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all!” Eph. i. 23.

And here then we are led to the fourth of the propositions which we at first enunciated, namely;—

That it is the Aggregate or Sum of such particular Communities, contemplated abstractedly, as an ideal whole, under the presidency of Jesus as its Head, which is called in Scripture

* Their origin was derivative, but their authority was primitive. They were formed by the instrumentality of men, but ruled by the direct law of Christ. They were “all primitive and all Apostolical, because all agreeing in one and the same unity because there was among them an intercourse of amity, and a recognition of fraternity, and a league of friendship; which rights sprang from no other law than the descent to *all of them of the same doctrine*.” So says Tertullian, de Præscript. Hæret. 20. “Sic omnes primæ, et omnes Apostolicæ, dum unâ omnes probant unitatem; dum est illis communicatio pacis, et appellatio fraternitatis, et contesseratio hospitalitatis; quæ jura non alia ratio regit quam ejusdem sacramenti una traditio.” (“Those who are acquainted with the Latin fathers know that *sacramentum* is constantly used by them for ‘doctrine.’” CARY on the Articles, 245.)

THE CHURCH; and in the Apostles' Creed, THE CATHOLIC, or universal, CHURCH.

It is not, we repeat, in any instance, one monstrous pyramid, piled up by successive layers of authority, one upon another, and at the summit thereof exalted a fallible sinful man as vicergerent, or vicar, of Christ; which the Scriptures indicate by this term "The Church;" but it is always, *either* some one particular community, to which the demonstrative article points, and which the context indicates, either expressly or by implication, as "the Church at Jerusalem" (Acts ii. 47. viii. 1); or "the Church at Antioch" (Acts xiii. 1); or *else* it is *the Sum of all particular Communities*, looked upon as *an ideal whole* under the exclusive Presidency of Christ himself;—the Heads, or Angels, of those particular churches being recognized, as in the Apocalypse, as accountable *only to Him* who holds *each several star* in his own right hand. Any other scheme, though very imposing by its vastness, is equally impracticable, as it is unscriptural; and, like the sublime attempt at universal empire by old Rome, must fall to pieces by its own unwieldiness. But still more—any other scheme would be just that very "mystery of iniquity,"—that working of the lust of pre-eminence and domination over the consciences of men,—that spiritual despotism,—against which the Apostle expressly warns the Thessalonians when he tells them that ere long "that man of sin shall be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God" (*i. e.* the Church), "shewing himself that he is God;" by usurping in it the office, and attempting to execute in it the jurisdiction, which belongs to the divine Head of his people, Jesus Christ, alone. The term "THE Church," belongs of right, (except where an ellipsis of the place occurs) to *no one*

particular body of Christians; it is not to be arrogated by any one Society of those who serve the Lord Christ; but it belongs only, in its Scripture acceptation, to the Aggregate, or Sum of particular bodies, of which aggregate, or sum, these several particular bodies form integral parts just in proportion—and only in proportion—as they hold fast Christ’s doctrine—as they are actuated by Christ’s Spirit—and as they regulate themselves according to Christ’s appointments. Else do they fall off, like withered branches, from the true Vine. Else are they actually removed, and their light put out, by their jealous Lord, even as to the churches of Asia, he declared, (and his words have been awfully verified, to this day,) “I will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”

And it is then of *such a whole, made up of such parts*, that our Lord speaks, when he says to Peter, “On this rock I will build *my Church*, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Matt. xvi. 18. It is of such a whole, made up of such parts, that St. Paul declares, “Christ loved *the Church* and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, as by the washing of water, by the word.” Eph. v. 26. And it is of such a whole made up of such parts, that the same Apostle says, that Christ “is the Head of the body, *the Church*” (Col. i. 18); yea that God “created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by *the Church* the manifold wisdom of God” (Eph. iii. 9, 10); and therefore bursts into that ecstatic utterance of adoration towards Him who works throughout this sacred body as its life, “To Him be glory *in the church* by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen!” Eph. iii. 21.

And it is consequently of such a whole, made up of such parts, that we speak, when in the Apostles’ Creed, (which Creed is true and binding on us *only in the sense of the word*

of God—only so far as its several Articles “may be proved by most certain warrants of holy Scripture,”) we profess to believe in “The holy *Catholic Church*.” This is the sense in which the term is presented to us by Theophylact, when he defines the Catholic Church “that which is *diffused throughout all the world*, whose sum, or whole, is made up of *all the churches everywhere*, and which has for its one head, Christ.”* And again by Cyril of Jerusalem, who says, “The Church is called *Catholic*” (or universal), “because it is diffused throughout all the world, from one end of the earth to the other; and because it teaches *catholically*” (universally) “and *without any omission* all the doctrines which ought to be brought to the knowledge of men,...and because it administers the *Catholic*” (universal) “remedy for all the forms of human sinfulness,... and because it possesses in itself the whole sum of the pure Ideas of moral excellence in deed and word, and every sort of spiritual gift.”† The later notion of the Catholic Church—the parent of such wide-spreading and intolerable evil—that it is an *universal spiritual Monarchy, under one despotic Autocrat*; or, in a word, that the inward *union* of Christian individuals and Communities can be represented only by an outward *Unity*,—or rather *Unicity*—of Ecclesiastical jurisdiction—this was first worked up into a Theory (and truly a very splendid one) in the elaborate treatise of Cyprian; and then, alas! too soon wrought out into practice by the successive encroach-

* On 1 Cor. xii. p. 271. Καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία ἡ πανταχοῦ τῆς οἰκουμένης, ἥς τὸ σῶμα συνέστηκεν ἐκ τῶν ἀπανταχοῦ ἐκκλησιῶν, ἔχον τὴν κεφαλὴν τὸν Χριστὸν. SUICER in v. ἐκκλησία.

† Cateches. xviii. Καθολικὴ καλεῖται, διὰ τὸ κατὰ πάσης εἶναι τῆς οἰκουμένης, ἀπὸ περάτων γῆς ἕως περάτων· καὶ διὰ τὸ διδάσκειν καθολικῶς καὶ ἀνελλιπῶς, ἅπαντα τὰ εἰς γνῶσιν ἀνθρώπων ἐλθεῖν ὀφείλοντα δόγματα,—καὶ διὰ τὸ καθολικῶς ἰατρεύειν μὲν καὶ θεραπεύειν ἅπαν τὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν εἶδος,—κεκτῆσθαι ἐν αὐτῇ πᾶσαν ἰδεὰν ὀνομαζομένης ἀρετῆς, ἐν ἔργοις τε καὶ λόγοις καὶ πνευματικοῖς παντοίοις χαρίσμασι. SUICER, in verb.: καθολικός.

ments of the ambitious bishops of Rome, till they fulfilled the prophecy of the great Apostasy, and revealed themselves as the Antichrist, the man of sin, denounced by the Apostle Paul. But, on the contrary, the true scriptural *Unity* of the church is that of many members, each in its place of equal importance, under one *invisible Head*. And the true scriptural *Catholicity*, or Universality, of the church is just the *Ideal Whole* which is conceived as made up by the aggregation of these several members ; * and by the diffusion through them of that quickening, actuating, and harmonizing Spirit of life, which is the Spirit of Christ, and of God,—the Holy Ghost. Even as says the Apostle, “ There is one body and *one Spirit*, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling ; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Eph. iv. 4—6.†

See then, dear Reader, what is indispensable to constitute *you* a living member, both of any one particular religious community, and of the *Catholic Church* of Christ. It is indispensable, you perceive, that you should possess in yourself this

* “ For the single persons professing faith in Christ are members of the particular churches in which they live ; and all those particular churches are members of the General and Universal Church, *which is One by unity of aggregation*.”—BP. PEARSON.

† “ It appears plainly from the sacred narrative, that though the many churches which the Apostles founded were branches of one *Spiritual Brotherhood*, of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the heavenly Head—though there was ‘ one Lord, one faith, one baptism,’ for all of them, yet they were each a distinct, independent community *on earth*, united by the *common principles on which they were founded and by their mutual agreement, affection and respect* ; but not having any one recognized Head on earth, or acknowledging any sovereignty of one of those societies over others.” ABP. WHATELY *on the Kingdom of Christ*, p. 102. I rejoice to meet (while passing through the press) with such a confirmation, from such a quarter, of the views put forth in the text.

So also in page 137 of the same work the Archbishop adds, from the

one Spirit which animates that *one body*; that you should be filled with the faith of God's elect—animated by their hope—united by spiritual union to their Lord. Vain, worse than vain, will be our *ecclesiastical union* with any one of those churches over which Christ rules, if we do not, by means of this union, and making the most of all the advantages afforded us in this union, attain to and keep up a *spiritual communion* with that head himself. Look to this. Pray for this. Be satisfied with nothing short of this. That being thus made a lively member of Christ's Holy Catholic Church on earth, you may be at the same time reckoned among that "whole family in heaven and earth which is named of him;" you may be joined already in spirit to "the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven;" and may come at last to that "great multitude which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, which stand before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, crying with a loud voice, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb!"

Encycl. Metrop. : "The Church is undoubtedly *one*, and so is the human race *one*; but not as a *Society*. It was from the first composed of distinct societies; which were called one, *because formed on common principles*. The circumstance of its having one common Head, (Christ,) one Spirit, one Father, are points of unity which no more make the Church One Society on earth, than the circumstance of all men having the same Creator, and being derived from the same Adam, renders the human race one family. The Church is *one* then, not as consisting of one society, but because the various societies, or churches, were then modelled, and ought still to be so, *on the same principles*; and because they enjoy common privileges,—one Lord, one Spirit, one baptism."

CHAPTER V.

THE CHURCH, HOLY.

IN considering that Article of our Creed which treats of "The holy Catholic Church," as the Sphere in which the Holy Ghost fulfils the work assigned to him as the Vicegerent of Christ, we have seen,—First, that our blessed Lord expressly designed that his personal followers should form themselves, after his departure, into a Community for religious ends, *i. e.* a Church ;—Secondly, That such a religious Society, or Church, was accordingly actually formed in Jerusalem, under the jurisdiction of the Apostles ;—Thirdly, That as the Gospel spread throughout Judea and into heathen lands, other religious Societies, on the same principles and for the same ends, were constituted in various places, which Societies are spoken of in Scripture as "the Churches" of Christ ;—and, Fourthly, That the Aggregate or Sum of all such actual Societies, taken together as an Ideal Whole, is what is termed by the sacred writers "the Church," and in the Apostles' Creed "The Catholic" (or universal) "Church ;" of which Catholic, or universal, Church the various particular religious communities are to be looked upon as parts so far,—and only so far—as they hold fast the doctrine—are actuated by the Spirit—and regulate themselves according to the appointments, of their One Sole Head, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And thus we have learned what is meant in the Creed when it speaks of "The Church" as one comprehensive body ; and when it calls this body "The Catholic" or universal, "Church." There remains therefore now but one more

point to be investigated in this clause; namely, Why is this body called “The *holy* Catholic Church?”

Now this point will be developed if we go on to consider the last of those Five propositions before enunciated as comprising the whole of the Scripture doctrine concerning the Church: this namely,—

That *the End for which our Lord designed the formation of those several religious Communities, which, taken together as an Ideal whole, are called “The Church,” is the more effectual communication of Himself by His Spirit, to all the members of the same; with reference to which End, and the relation into which the Church is brought to Christ in order to that End, it is called “The HOLY Catholic Church.”*

For, if you look into Scripture on this last particular, you will find that Christ has taken his church into a special *relation to Himself*,—which confers upon it an *ideal* holiness; in order to the training up its members into *likeness to himself*,—which constitutes its *actual* holiness. Or in other words; he, at once, and preliminarily, through the freeness of his grace, receives men into *Union*, that he may subsequently by the gradual operation of his Spirit, bring them into *Communion* with himself. He imparts to them the righteousness which flows from his imputed merits, in order to produce in them the holiness which flows from his communicated presence. He makes them to *be accounted* holy, by relation, in order that they may *become* holy in person.*

* While preparing these pages for the press I find that Bishop Hopkins has employed just the same term to express the external sanctity of the Church of Christ. He says; “To be sanctified... is no other than to be appointed, separated, or dedicated to God. There are two ways of dedication unto God, whereby his title takes place, and what is so devoted becomes his. *THE one external*, by men. . . whereby there is no change at all wrought in the nature of the thing thus dedicated, but only a change in the *relation* and propriety of it. As

We have therefore, in this Chapter, to contemplate the Church as “Holy” in these two senses. First, *in idea*, from the *relation* of its members to their risen Lord. And Secondly, *in fact*, by the *assimilation* of those members, through the Spirit, to their Lord.

SECTION I.

THE CHURCH HOLY BY RELATION TO CHRIST.

THE Church is “holy” *in idea* from the relation into which it is brought with its risen Lord. And it is just this *relative*

there is a two-fold dedication or separation, so there is also a *two-fold sanctification*. There is an *external*, *RELATIVE*, or *ecclesiastical* sanctification, which is nothing else but the devoting or giving up a thing or person unto God, by those who have a power to do so. There is an *internal*, *real*, and *spiritual* sanctification ; and in this sense a man is said to be sanctified when the Holy Ghost doth infuse into his soul the habits of divine grace, and maketh him partaker of the divine nature, whereby he is inwardly qualified to glorify God in a holy life.” He then asserts that “Baptism is the immediate means of our *external and RELATIVE sanctification* unto God.”... “Hence it follows that all those who are members of the visible church, may truly be called Saints, and members of Christ, and the children and people of God.”... For the Christian Church now, is in the same capacity, and stands in the same relation towards God as the Jewish Church did. But clear it is that in the most corrupt state of the Jewish Church, God still owned them for his people. Jer. iv. 22. ‘My people is foolish ;’ ‘They have not known me ;’ and Isaiah i. 3, 4. ‘My people doth not consider.’ ‘Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers !’ They are God’s people, and yet ‘a people laden with iniquity.’ My children ; and yet ‘a seed of evil doers ; children that are corrupters.’ Yea, and in the New Testament we find sanctification and holiness ascribed to those who were never otherwise sanctified than by their *external separation* from the world and profession of the doctrine of Christ. St. Paul directs his epistles to the whole Church of Corinth, as to ‘Saints ;’ ‘To them which are sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be saints ;’ 1 Cor. i. 2. Yet were there some in this Church of Corinth, that had not the knowledge of God, that denied the resurrection, and were grossly guilty of foul and flagitious crimes.” — BISHOP HOPKINS as quoted by BISHOP M’ILVAINE : in his “*Oxford Divinity*.”

holiness, thus imparted to it, from its union with Christ—made over to it as the bridal privilege which flows from his choosing it as his own peculiar treasure—that St. Paul illustrates by a very touching image in his letter to the Ephesians, chap. v. 25—33. He had begun to speak of the duties of Christian husbands towards their wives, which duties he sums up in that all-comprehensive one of Love: “Husbands, love your wives!” But how? to what extent? with what feelings? for what end? “*Even as Christ also loved the Church.*” The Apostle wants an illustration of the freeness, fulness, tenderness, which should characterise wedded love, and he gathers it from that topic with which his heart was constantly occupied, the love of Christ. Just as when he sought to stir up the Corinthians to beneficence he tells them, “Ye know *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich!”—just as when he would enforce a self-denying—nay even self-forgetting—charity on the Philippians, he says, “Let the same mind be in you *which was also in Christ Jesus!*”—so, when he wants to press home *love*—a love of the noblest and most delicate kind—towards one who is to be looked upon as brought into the closest union with ourself; then, similarly, does his mind recur to *Christ*. “Husbands love your wives, *even as Christ also loved the Church!*” O that our hearts may be ever full, as was the Apostle’s, of *Christ!* that we may derive our strongest impulses to every duty from such affectionate recollection of *Christ!*

But that comparison which St. Paul has recourse to, to illustrate what should be a Christian conjugal affection, thus furnishes an illustration, in return, of *the close relation in which the risen Jesus stands to his people*. Let husbands love their wives as Christ loves the church, for the Church is to Christ as a wife to her husband. Even as a bridegroom to his bride,

so is Christ to the Community of his people. Even as a Bride to him who has chosen her for his own, so is that Community to Christ. The whole figure, from the 25th to the 27th verse, is borrowed from this tender yet dignified relation; and consequently all the expressions in those verses receive their proper interpretation only in the light of that figure. The Eastern bride was purchased at a costly price:—Christ “*gave himself*” in dowry “for the Church.” The Eastern bride was purified for the nuptials by the bath:—Christ “purifies the church, as with the washing of water, *by his word*.” The Eastern bride was then brought forth with solemn state, and in all her shining ornaments presented to the bridegroom:—Christ has “*presented to himself* his church,” thus radiant through the ornaments with which he has himself adorned her. Such is the relative holiness, the bridal purity and honour, with which the Lord invests his people, as consecrated to himself.

Observe, how, in the first place, *he has purchased to himself the Church at a most costly price.*

The steward of Abraham gave for Rebekah “jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and precious things.” Jacob gave for Rachel the best of his youth and strength. He served for her seven years; and they seemed to him but a few days, for the love he bore to her. Shechem the son of Hamor said, in his love for Dinah, Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me; but give me the damsel to wife. David gave for the daughter of Saul the dowry of two hundred Philistines slain by his valour and strength. But what is all this to the costly dowry which Christ has given, wherewith to betroth to himself his Church? “Christ loved the Church and *gave himself* for it!” Himself! And are we not reminded here of what St.

Paul says to the Hebrews, of the Almighty God; "Because he could swear by no greater, he swore *by himself*." Even so, because the Lord could give nothing greater, nothing so precious, he gave *himself*! With his own life he purchased us to be his people. The blood of the bridegroom was the dowry for the bride! O what love indeed is this! "Christ also hath loved us, and hath *given himself* for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God!"

And what then has he next done for this bride of his free affections, purchased for himself at such a price? Observe; "he gave himself for the Church, *that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water, by the word.*" The Eastern bride was purified in the bath, for presentation to her husband. And when the Prophet Ezekiel would represent by the most striking image the great things God had done for Israel in his spontaneous compassionate affection for her, it is by just this very figure that he illustrates both the natural unworthiness and defilement of the nation, and the purification which the Lord vouchsafed to it, when he made it his own. "None eye pitied thee, to have compassion upon thee; but when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, live. Yea I swore unto thee and entered into covenant with thee," (the marriage covenant,) "saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine. Then *washed I thee with water*, and I anointed thee with oil. I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badger's skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk." Ezek. xvi. 5—10. The outcast and the loathsome was purified and adorned—was cleansed and sanctified—to be made fit for her nuptials with the King of kings. The nation that had lain among the pots of Egypt, in dust and dishonour, was made as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold. And so says Paul of the converts

to the faith of Christ. Whatever their past obscurity or defilement, their alienation and their guilt, they "were washed, were sanctified, were justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of their God." Christ has provided for the bride whom he has purchased at a price so costly, a purification, of which all outward washings are but an imperfect symbol. What the outward washing of water is to the cleansing of the body, that the inward infusion of Christian truth is to the cleansing of the mind. "The word,"—that which St. Paul delights to call emphatically and without filling up the ellipsis, "The word," (cf. Gal. vi. 6. Phil. i. 14. 2 Tim. iv. 2,) but which he elsewhere terms, at length, "the word of the truth of the gospel" (Col. i. 5), "the word of faith" (Rom. x. 8), "the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. v. 19), "the word of life" (Phil. ii. 16), "the word of Christ" (Col. iii. 16), "the word of God's grace" (Acts xx. 32); the proclamation, therefore, of free pardon and acceptance through the reconciling mediation of the Son of God—this it is which "*purifies the conscience* from dead works to serve the living God;" this, which cleanses and consecrates the ransomed spirit to a sacred relationship of humble confidence toward its gracious Lord; this, which wins over the admiring heart to follow the injunction of the Psalmist in that splendid nuptial ode (which is not without its mystic meaning in relation to the Church of God) "Hearken, O daughter and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty, for he is thy Lord,* and worship thou him!" How beautiful are the analogies in which Scripture delights to set forth spiritual truths, adorning while illustrating! How exquisitely is the *entire acceptableness*—the freedom from all offensiveness—yea the attractive comeliness, the imputed righteousness and perfect justification of the be-

* *i. e.* Thy husband. See Gen. xviii. 12: 1 Pet. iii. 6.

loved of Christ, the elect of God, thus figured out! The Church is to Christ as his selected bride. And her perfect acceptableness, through belief in his atonement, is as the cleansing in the nuptial bath. And this figure which St. Paul sets forth to the ear in words, is presented to the eye in deed, by the very sacrament of initiation, the rite of our espousals to the Lord. Baptism is ordained to be the sign and seal of this acceptance; the laver of regeneration, or transference into a new relation to Christ. And it becomes, as St. Peter assures us, to all who receive it with a living faith, “not the mere putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience,” the assurance of a cleansed, and justified mind, that God has entered into covenant with us—that we are united to Christ—that the Son of God has loved us, and given himself for us, and made us his! And may we not then say to Christians, thus awakened to a sense of union with their risen Lord, even as the Prophet says to Israel, “Thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name!” Yea even as he cheers her in another place, “Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken, for the Lord delighteth in thee. As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee!”

For what is declared to us, yet further, concerning this relative holiness of the Church, by the figure which we are considering? That *Christ presents to himself this Church*, as an adorned and radiant bride, the object of complacency and love. For this is what is intimated by the words of the 27th verse, “that he might present it to himself a glorious” (*i. e.* resplendent, radiant*) “church,† not having spot, or wrinkle, or any

* See *ἐνδοξος* in Luke vii. 25, *οἱ ἐν ἱματισμῷ ἐνδόξῳ* “they which are gorgeously apparelled.” Ps. xlv. 13. “The king’s daughter is all glorious within;” (in her palace) “her clothing is of wrought gold.”

† Or rather, “that he might unite to himself the church, radiant &c.”

such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." It is not of any *final presentation* of the Church before the Lord, at his second coming,—and not of any preparation for such presentation, by his working in her a moral holiness of character now,—that these words are used; but it is of his *first taking her into union with himself*; solemnizing his espousals with her; and endowing her with that imputed righteousness of *conjugal relation*, by which he looks upon her, and accepts her, with complacency, as his own, his radiant bride. The Eastern bride was brought in solemn pomp to her betrothed; was welcomed by his approving smile; was installed by him as partaker of his rank and fortune. "She shall be brought unto the king," says the Psalmist of the royal bride of Solomon, "in raiment of needlework; the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace." Ps. xlv. 14, 15. And therefore in terms derived from this same solemnity does Ezekiel depict the perfect acceptableness of Israel in the sight of the Lord, and the glory which he vouchsafed to put upon her: "I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and brodered work; and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty; *for it was perfect through my comeliness which I had put upon thee*, saith the Lord God." Ezek. xvi. 11—14. There is the image of that bridal glory, in which the Apostle John beheld the Church, in

παράσθησθαι, *adjungeret, sociaret*, ut sponsa jungitur sponso. See Bos. *ad h. l.* Comp. 2 Cor. xi. 2. "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you (παράσῃσαι) as a chaste virgin to Christ."

her *Idea*, as clothed already before God in heaven, with that perfect righteousness, or acceptableness, which entitles her to participate in her Lord's final triumph, and reign with him on his millennial throne. "I, John, saw the holy City, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, *prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*" Rev. xxi. 2.

Such then is the *holiness* of the Church resulting from its *sacred relation* to the King of saints—such the imputed righteousness of the people of God as justified and accepted through his merits, and *counted holy* for his sake. And hence it is that such magnificent terms are used in Scripture of the several Christian communities, *contemplated ideally as wholes*, even though within those very Communities there was so much to censure, and so many *individuals* who were dishonouring God. It is as *belonging to Christ*—as having been purchased by the blood of Christ—as being sanctified and purified by the merits of Christ,—as brought into a sacred covenant and engagement with Christ—that St. Paul denominates the Roman Christians "beloved of God, called, saints;" and that he addresses the Corinthians as "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called, saints." And it is this same *sacredness of relationship*, this freeness of acceptance in the Beloved, which is represented to us by the washing of baptism, as the first step towards all moral improvement, the preliminary condition of all progress in Christian excellence, the point of starting, from which alone we can run with security and success the race of personal holiness to which we are called. Remember this, dear Reader! Hold fast this truth. Consider that "you are not your own, but bought with a price, that you may therefore glorify God in your body and your spirit, which are God's." Recollect that Christ has freely purified you, yea presented you to himself adorned with all the comeliness of his unmerited complacency, that you may thenceforth, and because of this, love him who

first loved you ; be faithful to him who has taken you for his own ; and walk worthy of him who has called you to his eternal kingdom and glory ! Justification must precede sanctification ; and therefore the doctrine of the *relative holiness* of the Church of Christ, through her *union* with him, is an indispensable preliminary to her *personal holiness* through *communion* with him. “Thou art *an holy people*,” says Moses to the Israelites, “unto the Lord thy God : the Lord thy God *hath chosen thee* to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are on the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people ; but *because the Lord loved you*, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen. Thou shalt *therefore* keep the commandments and the statutes and the judgments which I command thee this day, to do them.” Deut. vii. 6—11.

And O how full of *practical admonition*, then, is this subject ! Let me point out some few particulars in which the devout belief of it will work upon the heart and life.

First—with what *adoring gratitude* will the Christian contemplate his relation to Christ. Are you indeed made “holy” through the imputation of his merits, and not for your own works and deservings ? Are you counted, for his sake, comely, honourable, beloved ? How glorious is your privilege ! How high the rank to which you have been raised ! The husband, you know, whatever his rank, raises his wife up to the same, from whencesoever she have been taken. The wealth, the dignity, the nobility, the royalty, of him who has chosen her becomes her own. And you, then, Christian, being chosen in Christ, are raised up to his dignity, endowed with his wealth and glory. He has “lifted you up” as it were, “from the dunghill, and set you with princes, even the princes of his

people." And therefore even as a timid bride rejoices with an undefinable trembling when she looks to all the honour put upon her, and the privileges into which she is introduced by a princely choice; so let your heart flow out in grateful praise to your *royal Lord!* "Giving thanks unto the Father," says St. Paul to the Colossians, "which hath privileged us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light;"—for "you that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh, through death, to *present you* (*παραστήσαι ὑμᾶς*) holy, and unblameable, and unproveable in his sight." Col. i. 12, 21, 22. How similar, how equally strong the language here, to that which we have been considering! Who shall consider what Christ has done for him in thus betrothing him to himself, without exclaiming with the church of old, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God! He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness; as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and *as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels!*"

But next, learn hence the *jealous care* with which we should maintain our privilege in Christ. The Gentile churches when they heard the proclamation of free acceptance in Christ Jesus "were glad, and glorified the name of the Lord." Acts xiii. 48. But the next step was that "certain men came down to them from Judea and taught the brethren, Except ye be circumcised, after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." Acts xv. 1. And thus it is always. The Idea of completed relative holiness, through another than ourselves, without our own works and deservings, is so high, so transcendent, so difficult to seize, and still more to retain, in all its purity, that we are continually in danger of being seduced to think that we must strengthen our covenant with God, by some additional

securities derived from some other source than from the free electing love of our gracious Lord. Ceremonial strictness—ecclesiastical merit—priestly intercession—sacramental efficacy—something must be brought in to increase our recommendation to the notice and favour of God. But what would a bride think of the officious zeal of friends to *bribe* for her the kindness of her betrothed? What would a bridegroom think of any scheme for *laying him under an obligation* to make, or to maintain, that choice which he has already freely exercised from his spontaneous love? O how easily men treat God as they would never venture to treat men! The very thought of such a literally *preposterous* work as the negotiating for an union which has been already celebrated, and purchasing a grace which has been already bestowed, is destructive of the whole relation! And hence the prompt indignation with which it is repelled by Paul. “If by grace, then is it no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. But if of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work.” Rom. xi. 6. “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. Christ is become of no effect unto you, who soever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace!” Gal. v. 1—4. Christian, remember this! Your relation to Christ must truly be followed by personal holiness, but it cannot be created nor strengthened by personal holiness. Sanctification is truly as indispensable to salvation as is justification; but sanctification must not be brought in to produce, or to help out, justification. “Good works” as says our twelfth Article, “are pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and they spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith;” but assuredly the being in Christ must precede that which becomes pleasing and acceptable only in Christ; and though the tree is known by its fruits, that

tree must have been planted, yea and have been permeated by the sap of life before it will put forth fruits. Keep together *inseparable*, but at the same time keep together *distinct*, what you *are in* Christ, and what you must *become by* Christ. That is, in a word, remember constantly your *baptismal standing*, as set forth in your Catechism; “Wherein *I was* made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven,” and “*then*” and *therefore*, “my godfathers and godmothers did promise and vow three things in my name—that I should renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh.”

And therefore learn, once more, from this subject, the *earnest fidelity*, with which we should keep to this engagement made with us by the Lord. Israel was made holy, as God’s people—his betrothed. But Israel went away from God; and her manifold transgressions and idolatries are continually set forth by the prophets as adultery—unfaithfulness to her marriage vow to the Lord. And just with a similar figure St. Paul says to the Corinthians, anxious lest even in thought and feeling they should decline from the first glow of their affection towards the heavenly Bridegroom, “I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity” (the singleness and thoroughness of your first love) “that is in Christ.” And O then let us take this warning to ourselves! If we belong to Christ let us seek to become like Christ. If he has loved us let us with a devoted faithfulness love him. “As the elect of God” says Paul to the Colossians, “holy and beloved, put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering;—and whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him!”

SECTION II.

THE CHURCH HOLY BY ASSIMILATION TO CHRIST.

EVERY one who has made himself at all familiar with the world within himself as distinguished from the world without, must have felt the exceeding difference which exists between the idea which he has formed of a thing, in his mind, and its reality as brought out into actual life—between what he conceives in theory and what he meets with in experience—between the pattern, or design, which his imagination has sketched, and the copy, or execution, which his hand has accomplished.

Now without constantly adverting to this distinction between idea and fact we shall never be able to enter into the declarations of Scripture concerning divine things. Scripture is the book of the religious Ideas. It contains (like the vision showed to Moses in the Mount) the *patterns* of things according to the divine Idea. And much of its language is concerning these patterns—these pure models of truth and holiness—of which the actual *facts* of Christian history and Christian experience are but defective imitations. The Idea of *the Christian character*, for example, as depicted by St. Paul, how pure it is! how grand! how heavenly! And yet the *actual* character of the Christian men to whom he writes, how short it comes of this Ideal! how constantly is the Apostle obliged to point them to it, not as the image of what they are, but the pattern of what they should be—at once their admiration and their shame! “The spiritual man judgeth all things, yet he

himself is judged of no man." "But I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ!"

The Idea, again, of *our relation to God* as Christians, how complete is the reconciliation—how free the access—how certain the inheritance—which it assures to us, as the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus! And yet what Christian is there whose *actual* experience realizes, without interruption, this complete assurance of the Father's complacency—this enjoyment of his presence—this hope of his glory? "Ye are complete in him" says St. Paul to the Colossians. And yet he is obliged to write, a few verses further on, "If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as though living in the world are ye subject to ordinances?"

Just so is it also with the Idea of *the Church of Christ*; and her relation to her Lord. Looked at in theory she is perfect, sanctified, glorious, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Our *relative holiness* as brought into union with our risen Head, and having his merits imputed to us, is complete. We are made "the righteousness of God in him." And yet this beautiful Idea finds not its proper correlative in *fact*. This splendour of *the Church* is not exhibited by the *churches*. And even as the Idea of the Christian man—the model of what he should be in privilege and character—gives only the standard by which he must try himself, and to which he must be continually approximating; so similarly, the Idea of the whole Community of Christian men, *i. e.* of the Church, gives only the standard by which all particular churches must be tried, and to which they must be continually approximating. Or, in other words, the *relative holiness* of the church, resulting from its union with the Lord, has been vouchsafed only in order to—for the production of—to give encouragement and strength for working out in all its members—that *personal*

holiness, to promote which is the ultimate end for which the Church has been constituted by Christ.

To this second sense, then, in which the Catholic Church is called "Holy," in our Creed, we now address ourselves. Our *Sanctification* is the end for which we have been *justified*. Our moral perfectness is the object for which we have been assumed into favour. The *righteousness* of Christ has been vouchsafed us, through his grace, in order to our becoming moulded into the *likeness* of Christ, by his Spirit.

And it is just this *moulding into the likeness* of Christ—this communication of Himself, in his moral character, to all the members of his spiritual body—by the infusion of his Spirit; of which St. Paul treats in the fourth chapter of his letter to the Ephesians, from the seventh to the sixteenth verse, when he says, "To every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ—for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ—that we may grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual measure in the working of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

Where, you observe, the image employed by the Apostle is different from that which in the fifth chapter he uses for illustrating the relative holiness of the church—that image of her relation to her Lord, as a bride to her husband, which we have already considered at length. And this, because in the fifth chapter he treats of the relation of *Union* in which Christ stands to his people; but in the fourth chapter, of the relation of *Communion* by which he actuates his people. The one figure expresses what Christ does *for* the church, and the church *is to* Christ. The other expresses what Christ does *in*

the church, and the church *becomes by* Christ. The one is the relation of a husband to his wife—that of affectionate care. The other is the relation of the head to the body—that of vital influence.

And thus we learn that the one great end for which the church of Christ has been taken into union with him, is the diffusion, throughout all its members, of *the presence and life of Christ himself*, even as the vital spirits—the nervous energy—are diffused from the head throughout the natural body to the quickening, nourishing, actuating all its members into perfect harmony and vigour. And that the three chief means by which this end is provided for by our exalted Head, are—the instructions of his ministers—the fellowship of his people—and the infusion of his Spirit.

The instructions of his ministers. For “He gave” says the Apostle, “some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints” (*i. e.* the finishing them into perfect similarity with their Lord); “for the work of the ministry; for the edifying” (or causing to grow up and expand into its proper stature) “of the body of Christ.” That which Jesus himself began to do, while on earth, for his personal followers, that he has commissioned his ministers to do, each one according to those particular faculties with which he is endowed, and in that particular portion of his church to which he is sent. The object of Jesus was to form his followers into transcripts of himself. The object of the Christian minister is, similarly, to form his people into transcripts of his Lord. “Be ye followers of me,” says Paul, “even as I also am of Christ.” And if you would duly estimate both the divine authority and the infinite importance, of the work and office of the ministry, you must look at it in this light, in

which St. Paul exhibits it. He who was emphatically The Teacher has constituted his ministers as teachers in his name and place. "As my Father hath sent me even so send I you." "Whosoever receiveth you receiveth me; and whosoever receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." And just a similar commission St. Paul claims for the instructors of the Christian community, constituted by Christ's Spirit. "When he ascended up on high, *he gave* gifts unto men—and he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." The Apostle, you see, has no notion of a church without *ministers*, duly authorized and qualified by Christ. And this because he has no notion of the accomplishment of the great end for which a church is constituted, (which is the realizing of the presence and life of Christ in all its members) without the agency of those who are the representatives of Christ; and concerning whom he says in one place, "Do you seek a proof of *Christ* speaking *in me*?" (2 Cor. xiii. 3) and in another, "Now then *we are ambassadors for Christ*; as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, *in Christ's stead*, be ye reconciled to God." 2 Cor. v. 20, 21.

And therefore, when the Separatist, who makes much of the liberty and independence which, he thinks, belong to him in Christ, claims for himself an all-sufficiency in his own particular mind, by his own unaided powers, or from the well-spring of the Spirit in his own single bosom, to educate himself into all the perfectness and ripeness of Christian truth, such a man altogether overlooks the way in which Christ teaches and the Spirit works.

For, does he say, I have the Spirit in my heart, and what need, therefore, have I of human teaching? He falsifies, by that term, "*human teaching*," the very first step of his argument; and suppresses the fact that Christ has designed the

ministry of his church to be the channel not simply of *human* teaching but of *divine*. "For this cause," says St. Paul to the Thessalonians, "thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it, *not as the word of men*, but, *as it is in truth*, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." 1 Thess. ii. 13. Nor is it on the ground of his Apostolical authority, or special inspiration that St. Paul thus speaks of himself as conveying to his people truths emphatically divine. He expects that this divinity shall be recognized *on its own merits*, through the exercised judgment and spiritual tact of those who listen to those truths;—the Spirit in the heart of the hearer responding to, and authenticating, the utterance of that same Spirit by the mouth of the Teacher. For he says in another place, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, *let him acknowledge* that the things that I write unto you *are the commandments of the Lord*." 1 Cor. xiv. 37. And again, "I speak as unto wise men; *judge ye* what I say." 1 Cor. x. 15. And again, "Seeing we have this ministry, we faint not; not handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth *commending ourselves to every man's conscience* in the sight of God." 2 Cor. iv. 1, 2. For though, most truly, it is the Spirit that teaches all the people of Christ, yet it is not merely by what he reveals *directly*, to even the devoutest and most meditative mind; but also, and much more, by what he reveals to us *indirectly*, through the minds of other men, that we are schooled in the knowledge of Christ. Cornelius was a *devout* man who *prayed to God alway*; and to him there was vouchsafed a vision of an angel of God coming in to him, and saying, Cornelius, thy prayers are come up for a memorial before God. But for what purpose was this communication from above? To give to him in his solitary spirit, a direct revelation of the Gospel of Christ? to foster in him that spirit of

independence which persuades men to believe that they are all-sufficient to themselves,—and to authorize him to become himself a church to himself? Nay,—but to say to him, “Send men to Joppa, and *call for one Simon*, whose surname is Peter; *he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.*” “Immediately therefore,” says the docile inquirer, to St. Peter, “I sent to thee, and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things *that are commanded thee of God.*” And then, while Peter “spake the words” which he had been by God commissioned to proclaim, even words of “peace by Jesus Christ;” the Spirit was poured out, through his ministration, on the assembled company, and “the Holy Ghost fell on all them which *heard the word.*” Acts xi. 15.

But, does such a solitary Self-instructor urge, yet further, True; but this was when the truths of God were treasured up only in Apostolic bosoms, and to be obtained only from their oral testimony; we have now these “words” in every man’s hands, and made accessible to every man’s perusal; I have my Bible; I have my understanding; and why should I not read exclusively by myself, find out for myself, judge for myself, and for myself excogitate the whole detail and compass of the truths of God, from the materials thus supplied to me, as well in my private chamber, as by means of the public instructions of other men? Then to such a question there is one answer that immediately presents itself, which each one will appreciate in proportion as he knows himself; his narrow powers; his limited information; his experience in all other subjects of investigation; which has told him that he can make no solid progress without instruction, warning, and various help, from his fellow men. If every man can be his own physician, or his own lawyer, then—no, not even then—may every man pretend to be his own divine. In no department of inquiry is any one mind sufficient to

itself. And still less can it be so in that wherein, above all others, the judgment is exposed to the influences of the will—the understanding is in danger of being perverted by the imagination and the feelings. The child of sense may not too hastily trust his individual perception when applied to truths emphatically super-sensuous. The heir of sin will fear to decide for himself alone upon the force and application of all the awful precepts of the Holy One. The eye which is dimmed by the mists of earth will gladly—anxiously—avail itself of every help by which its view can be extended onward into the expanse of heaven. Such is the answer which in every earnest humble mind will at once present itself to that too ready, arrogant, “Why not?”

But such an answer, in the case supposed, is precluded by that very self-sufficiency out of which the question sprang. And therefore our reply to such an one, must be, What says the very Scripture itself to which you thus confidently make appeal? When the Ethiopian Eunuch had got his Bible, and was reading in his chariot the words of the prophet Isaiah, what was *his* feeling of his power of absolute self-interpretation? Behold it in those words of deep humility, “How can I understand except some man should guide me?” And what, yet more, was the method by which God came to the aid of this self-mistrusting man, and helped his study of the word? Was it by interior suggestions,—a light from heaven shining on the page—a voice from above expounding what he did not understand? No! “The Spirit said *unto Philip*, Go near and join thyself to this chariot;” and then the Eunuch “desired *Philip* that he would come up and sit with him;” and then “*Philip* opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture,” and from those very words which the Eunuch could not, of himself, make out, “he preached unto him Jesus.” Acts viii. 27—35. And say not, “This was a case of only inci-

pient knowledge, before conversion ; it applies not to the well informed spiritual Christian." Was not Apollos " an *eloquent* man and *mighty in the scriptures*," and " instructed in the way of the Lord," and " fervent in the spirit," and one who already " spoke and taught diligently the things of the Lord ?" And yet he knew only the baptism of John ; and when Aquila and Priscilla had heard him," they took him unto them, and *expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.*" Acts xviii. 24—26. Nay and at the very same time that John, in his First Epistle, reminds the brethren of their attainments in Christian knowledge, and spirituality ; so that " the anointing" he says, " which ye have received abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you ; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth and is no lie, and as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him,"—at this very same moment he is writing to them a pastoral letter to warn them against false teachers, and to exhort them, " Let that abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning !" It is not even knowledge of truth which can render unnecessary to us the ministrations of the Heralds of truth. We need continually to be reminded of what is familiar to us—to have enforced upon us what we already admit—to have opened out to us all the bearings of what we at once perceive—to have reflected upon us from every quarter, and intensified by every means, the light which shall guide our feet into the path of peace. And for these things are given to us Pastors and Teachers ; " for the *perfecting* of the saints, for the *edifying* of the body of Christ, till we all come, *in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God*, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." " I have not written unto you," says St. John, " because ye know not the truth, but *because ye know it.*" 1 John ii. 21. " This second epistle, beloved," says St. Peter, " I now write unto you ; in both

which I stir up your pure minds *by way of remembrance*, that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour." 2 Peter iii. 1, 2. "I am persuaded of you, brethren," writes St. Paul, "that ye also are full of goodness, *filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another*; nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as *putting you in mind*, BECAUSE OF THE GRACE THAT IS GIVEN TO ME OF GOD, THAT I SHOULD BE THE MINISTER OF JESUS CHRIST." Rom. xv. 14—16.

It is then, *in the Church* of Christ, through *the instruction of his Ministers*, that we must gain that insight into Christian truth, which is the first great, indispensable, means to *personal holiness*. Not that God does not, by his secret teaching, set home particular truths to particular individuals according to their particular needs; but that no man does he teach in all things, all in some; and therefore, that what is lacking in one must be supplied from others; and what the less furnished portion of the Community needs for its enlightenment must be concentrated before them, by those who are set apart to collect from every quarter the scattered rays of heavenly truth. Only as we have our eye open to all manifestations, and our heart submissive to all impressions, can we be filled and warmed with the divine light from above. The truth of Christ comes not to us in one full, direct, and overpowering beam of dazzling radiance—it is reflected on us from every side; it darts upon us at various times; it is compounded of innumerable rays; the main direction of whose course, the authorized and sanctified medium of whose communication, is that of the "Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers" whom Christ has given to his church.

But are we therefore taught that there is a mystic power conferred upon the ministers of Christ—a magic efficacy an-

nexed to their ministrations? An influence operating not according to the laws of mind and heart, but through a secret virtue in the Hierophant to work upon the Neophyte? Nay; but the words of St. Paul which we are meditating on, while they declare to us the *necessity* of the ministerial office to the edification of the body of Christ, exhibit to us as clearly what is *the essence and the glory* of it. There is in that passage not the slightest mention of sacramental mysteries whose efficacy depends upon the administrators—there is no limitation of the Spirit to some “tremendous” channels of grace which can be shut or opened by exclusive guardians of the awful gift—but the one end of the ministry is declared to be the bringing men to full age in Christ; and the one means indicated for this end is the *speaking the truth in love*. Christ has given Pastors and Teachers to his Church,—for what?—“That we may all come, in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, but *speaking the truth in love*, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” The ministration of Christian *knowledge*, this is the glory, as it is the one grand office, of the Ministers of Christ. It is Christian *truth* which is essential to Christian holiness. For that holiness is emphatically a *moral* holiness; a holiness, *i. e.* not of rite and ceremony—not of legal acts and abstinences—not of blind obedience—not of mechanical observance—but a holiness of *principle and purpose*. And all holiness of *principle and purpose* must have its origin in *truth* communicated to the mind, affecting the heart, and actuating the will. Of all the features of Christianity, therefore, this is one of the most marked,—that it is a system of *instruction*. “The grace

of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men *teaching us*," says St. Paul. Titus, ii. 11, 12. "Have ye *understood* these things?" asked our blessed Lord of his disciples. And when they answered, "Yea, Lord;" his reply was "Therefore, every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto an householder, which *bringeth forth out of his treasure* things new and old." Matt. xiii. 51, 52. Even as he had said before, "What I tell you in darkness that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear that preach ye upon the house tops." Matt. x. 27. Even as St. Paul exhorts Timothy, "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, *who shall be able to teach others also*." 2 Tim. ii. 2. And again, "I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and dead at his appearing and his kingdom; *preach the word*; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering *and doctrine*." 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. And this for the very reason that men had itching ears, and were inclined to heap to themselves teachers. The rage for preaching is to be met, not by undervaluing that divine ordinance, and taking refuge in dumb shows and ceremonies; but by out-preaching error, through redoubled diligence in disseminating truth, "*with all-long suffering and doctrine*."

But we must pass on to the *second means* indicated by St. Paul to the Ephesians (iv. 7—16) through which the personal holiness of the church of Christ is wrought: or, in other words the presence and life of Christ is communicated to his people, in order to assimilate them to himself. This is, *the fellowship of his people*.

For the will as much needs the help of others as does the mind. The heart can expand into holy affections only in the exercise of those feelings which towards the Christian *commu-*

nity are roused, and in the Christian *community* are nourished and strengthened. As our wisdom flows in upon us not directly but through the channels of society; so also our goodness depends for its production and support upon the sympathies, the warnings, the admonitions, the examples, the encouragements, which are provided in the church of Christ. The separatist can as little work out, for himself alone, his moral growth, as his mental illumination—his assimilation to Christ's holiness as his insight into Christ's truth. How often has this been tried by solitary enthusiasts; but they have found themselves unhumanized without being thereby rendered more divine! In spiritual as well as in all other respects, it is not good for man to be alone. The very gifts of God come down to him through the fellowship of the saints of God. "I long to see you," says St. Paul to the Romans, "that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established. That is, that I may be comforted" (edified and strengthened) "*together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me.*" Rom. i. 11, 12. And so in the passage which we are considering. After the Apostle had reminded the Ephesians, "There is *one body and one spirit*, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling," he goes on to declare that to every member of this body, *as a member*, and *because united to this community*, "is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." It is not, you observe, to Christians as separate individuals—it is not to each man as an isolated being, dwelling apart in private communion with his Lord alone, that this assurance of Christ's presence and inworking is vouchsafed;—but it is to Christians as *integrant portions of the Christian community*, even as our members are integrant portions of our body, and by their union with the whole, partake the nervous influence which through that whole is diffused. Just similarly as, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians,

(chap. xii.) when the Apostle had said, "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal," he goes on to show that he considers this manifestation to be vouchsafed to Christians *as a body*, and *in proportion to their union with each other in that body*. For, "all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For *as the body is one* though it hath many members, and all the members of that one body, though many, are one body, so also is Christ; for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." The whole notion of spiritual gifts is that of a communication made to each member of a Christian community because, and in proportion as, he forms a part of that one Sphere in which the Spirit dwells, and through which he diffuses the presence and life of the Invisible Head. It was when the disciples were "all with one accord in one place" on the day of Pentecost, that they "were all filled with the Holy Ghost." It was when the Apostles had "gone to their own company," and these "had lifted up their voice to God with one accord," that "the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." And it was when "the churches throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria were *edified*," *i. e.* were growing up together into an holy temple in the Lord—or to a full formed body in Christ, (it is the same term (*οικοδομέμεναι*) as in Eph. ii. 22 and iv. 16*)—when they were thus consolidating themselves, "and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort" or admonition "of the Holy Ghost" (*i. e.* of the pastors and teachers through whom the Holy Ghost strengthened and encouraged

* Eph. ii. 22. "In whom ye also are *builded together* (*συνοικοδομεῖσθε*) for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Eph. iv. 16. "From whom the whole body—maketh increase of the body unto the *edifying of itself* (*οικοδομῆν ἑαυτοῦ*) in love."

the people;*)—it was, I say, when those communities were thus enjoying the fellowship of the saints, and the instructions of the ministers of Christ, that “they were multiplied.” Acts ix. 31.

And yet what would even these means effect but for that last particular which the figure used by the Apostle, in the passage we are considering, more especially illustrates — *the infusion of Christ's holy Spirit*. It is by *the Spirit*, remember, that Christ specially communicates his presence and life to the hearts of his people. And it is by the Spirit, therefore, that he dwells in his universal church; which is no other than the sum or aggregate of his people; to work in its members that *personal holiness*—that holiness of *assimilation to his character*, in order to which he has taken that church into union with himself, and has conferred upon it, by such union, a *relative holiness* in the sight of God. And it is just this infusion of his Spirit, in his life-giving energy, “whereby the whole body of the church is governed and sanctified” that St. Paul refers to as the great means of the church's growth in sanctification, when he says, “From whom”—*i. e.* from Christ as the living Head, the source of nervous energy—“*the whole body*, being compacted by that which supplieth every joint,”—being articulated, organized, harmonized† by that pervading Spirit which is as the very marrow of spiritual life,—according to

* τῇ παρακλήσει τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος Compare Acts xiii. 15. “After the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of *exhortation* (παρακλήσεως) for the people, say on.” And Acts xv. 32. “And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves,” (and a prophet is one who “speaks as he is moved by the Holy Ghost” 2 Peter i. 21) “*exhorted* (παρακάλεισαν) the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.”

† συναρμολογούμενον καὶ συμβιβασζόμενον. literally; dovetailed, and inserted into each other. Comp. Eph. ii. 21.

the *effectual working* in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love." Eph. iv. 16. There is the source of all personal holiness! Hence must a vital union with Christ be gained! By this must all communion with him be enjoyed. Without this, ministers may teach, and fellow saints may animate—in vain! "If any man have not *the Spirit of Christ* he is none of his!" And this then must be sought by earnest prayer—this must be solicited by those devout ejaculations—that rising of the mind to high and heavenly things, which enables us to receive the words of Christian pastors, as in truth the word of God, effectually working in us believing it—which makes to us the assemblies of God's people none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven!

And how far, then, are you, my reader, possessed of this life-giving Spirit? You belong to the Church of Christ. Has this great end, for which that church was constituted, and from its consecration to which it bears the name of "the *holy Catholic Church*"—has it been attained in you? In order to this you have been brought into *sacred relation* to your Lord—in order to this you have Christ's ministers to instruct you—in order to this you are admitted to Christ's ordinances in the assemblies of his people—has this end of all those means been attained by you? Are you perfused by that "which supplieth every joint?" Think it not impossible to answer such a question. Fancy not the subject too transcendent to be judged of by mortal understanding. Even as life is known by its workings, so the life of Christ in you, by his Spirit may—yea must—be known. Does your body grow, and wax strong, and move with vigour and elasticity, and minister to you, through its healthy workings, ease and joyousness? You know thence that the vital spirits are equally diffused; that "that which supplieth every joint" is duly present in every

part. And would you then know if Christ is duly present in your soul ; as the Spirit of life, with “ effectual working in the measure of every part !” Then examine yourself. Prove your own self. Look for the practical manifestations of this presence in your heart and life. The Spirit himself is inscrutable, but “ the *fruit* of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness and truth !” “ The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” “ The kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and *joy in the Holy Ghost* ; and he that *in these things* serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men !”

CHAPTER VI.

CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

IT has long been the custom in the Church of Christ to recognize three great Christian graces as comprising the sum total of the dispositions which by the Spirit of God are wrought in the hearts of those who belong to Christ:—Faith, which respects our relation to God above us; Charity, which respects our relation to men around us; and Hope, which respects our relation to the world before us.

And it is remarkable how frequently the Apostle Paul not only makes, expressly, the enumeration, on which this division is based; but shows by his mode of writing, that he had it, on other occasions, in his mind; and that his thoughts concerning Christian excellence habitually arranged themselves in this threefold form. He tells us, for example, in 1 Cor. xiii. 13, “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three.” There is the theme, distinctly enunciated! But in other passages the same arrangement occurs under other forms of expression. There is variation and enlargement in the melody, but still the fundamental notes are precisely the same. Look to Galatians v. 5. “We, through the Spirit, wait for the *hope* of righteousness, by *faith* ;” which faith, he tells us in the next verse, “worketh by *love*.” Look, again, to 1 Thessalonians, i. 3, where the Apostle assures them that he commemorates without ceasing before God “their work of *faith*, and labour of *love*, and patience of *hope* in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Turn next to the fifth chapter of the same Epistle, v. 8 ; and you find him exhorting them, “ Let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breast-plate of *faith*, and *love*, and for an helmet the *hope* of salvation.” And if you go back to the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, you find him making his praises and prayers to God, concerning their Christian dispositions, to turn on just those same three ideas. “ I also,” he says to the Ephesians, i. 15, 18, “ after I heard of your *faith* in Christ Jesus, and *love* to all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you ; making mention of you in my prayers that ye may know what is the *hope* to which God has called you.” And to the Colossians he writes, i. 3—5. “ We give thanks to God,—praying always for you, since we heard of your *faith* in Christ Jesus, and of the *love* which ye have to all the saints,—for the *hope* which is laid up for you in heaven.”

But further, it is manifest that in this view there is nothing peculiar to St. Paul’s particular mode of thinking, but something involved in the very essence and spirit of Christianity in its application to the heart of man. For just the same ideas you find recurring together in the writings of another Apostle, St. Peter ; betokening thus the presence and inspiration of the same Spirit—the Spirit of the truth—in both. For St. Peter also, in his First Epistle, ch. i. 21, 22, having reminded his readers that God had “ raised up Jesus from the dead, and given him glory, that their *faith*, and *hope* might be in God,” passes on immediately to the next idea, which was linked so closely with these former two in his mind, that along with them it rose spontaneously above the horizon of his consciousness. “ Seeing then that ye have purified your souls in *obeying the truth* through the Spirit,” (which again is a periphrasis for their *faith*,) “ unto unfeigned *love* of the brethren,” (which is just St. Paul’s notion of *faith working*

by love, *) “see that ye love one another, with a pure heart fervently.”

Such are, according to the word of God, the fundamental dispositions which constitute the temper of a Christian man; and evidence the presence and inworking of the Spirit of Christ in his soul. And it does so happen that the Apostles’ Creed, in dilating on the Work of that Spirit in the church, as the Vicegerent of its invisible Head, has summed up all that it considers important to be confessed, and kept in mind with reference to that Work, in terms which imply and point to just a similar division. For, as I have already noticed, the last four clauses of this Creed do not bring before us separate, independent subjects of belief, but are in close connexion with that topic of THE HOLY GHOST which extends through the whole of the third division of this formula of faith; and these four clauses indicate to us as the sphere of the Spirit’s operations, so also the objects of those three practical graces which in that sphere he quickens and sustains—Faith, Hope, and Charity. The Article, I say, “The Holy Catholic Church,” declares *the Sphere* in which the Holy Ghost carries on the Work assigned to Him as the Communicator of Christ’s presence and life to his people. And the Articles, “The Communion of Saints”—“The forgiveness of sins”—and “The resurrection of the body to life everlasting”—declare respectively the objects of the several Christian graces of Love—of Faith—and of Hope—which in that Sphere the Holy Ghost raises up and fosters in the heart;—Love, which regards our Christian relation to our fellow saints in the same

* For *eis* here, represents the *φιλαδελφία* as the effect or consequence of the *ὑπακοὴ τῇς ἀληθείας*. Out of a heart purified by faith flows love to all who partake the same precious privilege. For *eis* denoting an *effect or consequence*, see MATTHIÆ, *Gk. Gr.* 578. c. BACC. 1161. *eis γόνον, eis δάκρυα* “so that mourning and tears follow.”

spiritual body ;—Faith, which regards our Christian relation to God as having forgiven our sins ;—and Hope, which regards our Christian relation to the world to come, as that wherein our whole personality, soul and body, shall partake of everlasting life. How glorious are these topics ! How fundamental ! How they penetrate to the very core of the Christian's heart ! May God enable us to profit by the consideration of them !

First then we enter on the consideration of that LOVE to the brethren which the Holy Ghost works in the members of Christ ; and which is referred to by that clause of our Creed, " THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS."

For, I need scarcely tell you that by the term " Saints " is meant here *all who name the name of Christ* ; all who have been admitted into that *relation to Christ* of which we have already spoken, and for his sake are counted, in idea, *holy*, sacred, " sanctified in Christ Jesus." The word " saints " is the same as " holy ones ;" and its root is a word which signifies *separation*—a setting apart from uses common and profane, to those which are sacred and divine. It denotes, therefore, all those who, through their *separation* from the sphere of darkness and of Satan, and their being brought into the region of light, and of God, have poured upon them the beams of his complacency, and possess thereby that *relative holiness* which belongs to every person, and even every thing, in connexion with Him. Thus, God says by Moses to the Israelites ; " Ye shall be *holy men* unto me" (" men of holiness " it is) ; and therefore they were to act differently, even as regarded their food, from the nations round them ; " neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field ; ye shall cast it to the dogs." Exod. xxii. 31. So again, in Exod. xix. 5, 6, the Lord says to his people, " Now then,

if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then shall ye be *a peculiar treasure* unto me above all people; and ye shall be unto me *a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.*" Which very expressions St. Peter adopts, and applies to describe the state and relation of the people of Christ. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, *an holy nation*, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; which in times past were not a people, but are now *the people of God*; which had not obtained mercy, but now *have obtained mercy.*" 1 Peter ii. 9, 10. And it is in this sense, therefore, that the word "saints" is continually, I might say invariably, used in the New Testament; namely to express *the multitude of those who have given their names to Christ*;—who are baptized into his church. Peter "came down to *the saints*" *i. e.* as we should say, the Christians, "which dwelt at Lydda." Acts ix. 32. "Many of *the saints*," says St. Paul of the Christians, "did I shut up in prison." Acts xxvi. 10. "Paul," he writes to the Corinthians, "unto *the church of God* which is at Corinth, with *all the saints* which are in all Achaia." 2 Cor. i. 1. "Now I go unto Jerusalem" he tells the Romans, "to minister unto *the saints*; for it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor *saints* which are at Jerusalem." Rom. xv. 25, 26. This then is that sense of the word "saints," of which it is needful to remind you; both because of the relation which this Article of our Creed bears to the foregoing; for "the Communion of Saints" is none other than the fellowship which should be exercised among all the members of (what is the same thing) "the holy Catholic Church:"*—and also because of the important practical deductions which result (as we shall see) from this sense,

* Sanctam Christianorum Ecclesiam, "communione sanctorum" fides nominat. Utrumque enim idem conjunctim significat. LUTHER, *Cat. Maj.* 498.

in its bearing on the nature and extent of that communion which we are called on to hold with the "saints."

For by this "Communion of saints" is declared the Sympathy—Fellowship—and Beneficence, which ought to be exercised, as between all the members of Christ's one body, so especially among those who by the circumstances of time, and place, and ecclesiastical connexion, are brought into personal contact; and the existence of which, as it is one of the first results, so also is a most indispensable evidence, of Christ's presence, by his Spirit, both in the individual Christian, and in the churches of the saints.

This Chapter, then, will comprise Four particulars. The Christian Sympathy—the Christian Fellowship—the Christian Beneficence, which make up the conception of Christian CHARITY or brotherly love; and the Derivation of this grace from the Holy Ghost, as one of the dispositions which it is his office to produce in the Holy Catholic Church.

SECTION I.

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY.

THE first thing that strikes us in the primitive community of saints at Jerusalem is their Christian SYMPATHY, or feeling for each other as joint members of the same spiritual body. "The multitude of them that believed" says the sacred historian, "WERE OF ONE HEART AND OF ONE SOUL." Acts iv. 32. What a striking description of unity and unanimity! It reminds us of the answer of the ancient philosopher when, being asked what is friendship? he replied One soul in two bodies. So here we have a "multitude;" and yet in all this multitude but one single heart and soul: the number of be-

lievers, many ; the spirit, one ; plurality of persons, but unity of sentiment, feeling, purpose ; as if all were moved from one centre—all actuated by one life.

Observe, first, the unity of *sentiment* which this phrase expresses. This little primitive community actually possessed (for a time at least) that to which St. Paul was obliged to *exhort* the Corinthians, as a thing to be pursued ;—“ Now I beseech you, brethren, that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be *perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment.*” 1 Cor. i. 10. And again, to the Philippians ; —“ Stand fast *in one spirit, with one mind,* striving together for the faith of the Gospel.” Phil. i. 27. And whence came this unity of Christian sentiment, or judgment ? I believe from the simplicity of their Christian faith. The grand question of these first converts was, “ What must we do to be saved ?” The simple answer of their teachers was, “ Repent ye and be baptized ”—“ Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved.” All thought was concentrated in that one idea,—Salvation. All minds had taken that one step,—Repentance ; the saving themselves from the untoward generation among which they had lived. All eyes were turned to that one object,—Christ. All hearts were satisfied with that one token of acceptance,—We have been baptized ! are members of Christ’s body—partakers of Christ’s life—expectants of Christ’s kingdom ! And where then was there *room* for divisions, here ? What subject of doubtful disputation could, on these points, enter their heads ? Like a multitude of people looking at one object ;—all can see the larger, more prominent features of it ; all receive the same impression concerning its general form ; it is only when you come to talk of the *details*, you discover that some eyes have been sharper than others—or some imaginations more active—or some judg-

ments less easily settled—or some wills more ready to make up in *positiveness*, what they feel they lack in *certainty*, upon the subject.

And if then, we would possess this unity of sentiment with our fellow Christians, let us cultivate this simplicity of belief. Let all our interest be fixed just simply on the few main, prominent features of the Gospel; and we shall find ourselves much more unanimous than we will, ourselves, in other states of mind, allow. Look to the records concerning dying Christians. Reflect on your own states of mind when bereavement, or sickness, bring very near to you the unseen, eternal world. And say, how many are the points which absorb your attention, which eclipse all others? Yea, say rather, how *few* they are! how undisputed! how incontrovertible! how full, how firm, how all-sufficient to sustain our mind. “Hell is before me,” said the high-souled Cecil, when reflecting on his ministerial work, “and thousands of souls shut up there in everlasting agonies. Jesus Christ stands forth to save men from rushing into this bottomless abyss. He sends me to proclaim his *ability* and his *love*. I want no fourth idea! every fourth idea is contemptible! Every fourth idea is a grand impertinence!”

And what a harmony of *feeling* comes out from this harmony of sentiment. Observe this as the second element of Christian Sympathy. Those first Christians were “of *one heart* and one soul.” They possessed what St. Paul calls “the comfort of love, the *fellowship of the Spirit*.” Phil. ii. 1. And what he praises when he commemorates in the Colossians their “*love in the Spirit* ;” (Col. i. 8 ;) and prays for, when he intreats for the Corinthians that “the *communion of the Holy Ghost* may be with them all.” 2 Cor. xiii. 14. “The communion of the Holy Ghost!” How often do we receive, and give, this benediction; and yet how little do we enter into it!

Communion, not simply *with* the Holy Ghost, and participation of his gifts ; but communion also *with each other* as fellow members of one body, *through* the Holy Ghost—through the pervading presence in each and all of that divine Spirit.

And here again we must ask, Whence did that primitive church enjoy this unity of feeling ? Because they were nourishing in themselves that one Spirit which had been poured out on the day of Pentecost ; which was promised by the Apostle to each new convert ; and which had been received by them through simple faith in Christ. As the Spirit is fostered by individual Christians, in that proportion will He display himself in the body which they together constitute. The spirit of faith—the spirit of humility—the spirit of love—the spirit of prayer—the spirit of hope—how can these come together, in different minds, without coalescing ? how can they abound in the *parts* of a congregation without *the whole* being “ of one heart and of one soul ? ” We cannot indeed command people to be of one heart. We cannot by any contrivances cajole them into sympathy. But where there is an affinity of feeling, their minds will run into each other whenever brought sufficiently in communication for the principle of attraction, which exists in each, to act. What constitutes the harmony of feeling in a literary society ? Their common love for the same subject—books. What that of a philharmonic society ? Their individual taste for, and proficiency in, the music, which when they come together, they find they can—because of that individual taste and proficiency—perform and relish in concert. And when may we look for harmony in a nation ? or in the great council of that nation ? Just in proportion, and so only, as the *education and early training ; and consequently* the views and principles and feelings, of the *individuals* who compose that nation or that council of the nation, have been similar in kind and equal in degree. Assimilate men in mind, and you

assimilate them in heart. Give them unity of principle, and you will find them exercising unity of spirit.

And hence it is that our blessed Lord, when he prays for unity of *feeling* among his disciples, prays for, *as the means to this end*, their unity of *sentiment* and knowledge of God. "Holy Father, keep through thine own name," or rather, Keep *in*, (*i. e.* in the knowledge of) thy name,—thy character as it has been revealed to them by me, v. 6—* "those whom thou hast given me, *that they may be one*, as we are." John xvii. 11. Hence it is that the Apostle Paul, when he has exhorted the Ephesians to "keep the *unity of the spirit* in the bond of peace," goes on to remind them of the full provision which Christ has made, *as a means to this end*, for their being educated into "the *unity of the faith*, and of the *knowledge of the Son of God*." And hence, again, that he connects the grace of *Love* so inseparably with that of *Faith*, as the product which grows out of it—the form in which its secret energy becomes manifested to the world. Our faith is a matter very much between us and God, and not easily, by itself, appreciable by our fellow men. But its reality, its purity, its vigour, shows itself to all by that which is *its social exponent*, Love. "Faith" says the Apostle, "which *worketh by love*"—works itself out to view, as the hidden life of the seed displays itself by the visible flower into which it developes itself. Gal. v. 6.† Even as he says again, to Timothy: "The end of the commandment," the grand duty that you have to press upon your people, "is Charity, *out of* a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of

* "I have *glorified thee* on the earth :—I have *manifested thy name* to the men which thou gavest me out of the world :—I have given them *the words* which thou gavest me :—and now, keep in this thy name those whom thou hast given me." John xvii. 4, 6, 9, 11.

† δι' ἀγαπῆς ἐνεργουμένην * operatur, vim suam exserit benevolentia ; amorem efficit. Comp. Eph. iii. 20.

faith unfeigned"—that brotherly love, *i. e.* which springs out of a mind purified from guilt and at peace with God through faith; and *therefore* at peace with all the children of God. 1 Tim. i. 5. O how true it is that only as we have just views of our own acceptance with God in Christ; and of the acceptance of our fellow Christians simply through faith in his merits;—only so, can we maintain a feeling towards them of cordial brotherly love. Whence come bigotry, divisions, party feeling? From narrowness of *mind*; from dimness of perception of *Christian truth*; from the limitations with which, through the contraction of their field of vision, men have circumscribed the broad plain object of faith presented in the revelations of God. When the ecclesiastical antiquarian doubts the acceptance of the Christian who partakes not all his preferences; or the ecclesiastical innovator refuses to worship with those who plead for existing institutions; it is just the same want of *faith* in both—faith in the great fact of acceptance to the penitent believer, not on account of ceremonial privilege, neither on account of spiritual purity, but only on account of the sacrifice and merits of the One Saviour and Sanctifier of all, Christ Jesus. And if we would abound in unity of Christian feeling we must learn to look on all who are in Christ as through Him united to the Father, and by Him partakers of that Spirit of the Father, which makes them God's children, and should therefore make them our brethren. "Peace be to the brethren" says St. Paul, "and *love with faith*, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." Eph. vi. 23.

And what, then, if with this harmony of Sentiment, and of Feeling, there be united a harmony of *Purpose*, among the followers of Christ? Then truly are they "of one heart and of one soul." For then they have all, whatever their personal distinctions, of temperament, or character, or condition, the

same end in view ; and that end simply the service and glory of God. And where there is unity of *end*, there Christian sympathy is, not hindered but assisted, by the most extensive diversity of *means*. Unity does not imply identity. Nay rather it can exist only amidst plurality and diversity. It is the contribution of many minds to the same work. It is the joining in of many instruments in the same piece. It is not melody, but harmony—and this harmony the more grand, the greater the diversity of sounds brought together ; the more each individual performer is able to throw in a note or strain which others cannot reach. Each man with something of his own, yet each contributing that something to his fellow Christians ; and receiving back from them the something which they on their parts can contribute to him ; and all this for a common end—the advancement of a common cause—the service of a common Master—the production of a common good ;—this it is which completes that Christian Sympathy which is the first great element of the communion of saints. And by this is realized that remarkable promise in the inspired predictions of the times of the Messiah ; “ They shall be my people, and I will be their God, and I will give them *one heart and one way*.” Jer. xxxii. 38, 39. “ And I will give them *one heart*—and they shall be my people and I will be their God.” Ezek. xi. 19, 20.

SECTION II.

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.

THE second feature of that Christian Charity which the Holy Ghost works among the members of Christ, in "the Communion of Saints," is Christian FELLOWSHIP. This is a disposition to count all those as brethren in the Lord who have been consecrated to our heavenly Master, and to maintain with them a companionship in Christian worship so long as they retain their union to their Head, whatever be their personal deficiencies. Or, in other words, it is the looking on Christ's people as "holy," not in themselves, but on account of their relation to the Lord; and *for the sake of that relation*, yea for the sake of *Him* to whom they bear that relation, the being patient with their errors—with their transgressions—yea with their unconvertedness; and the welcoming them to the assemblies of the faithful—joining with them in the worship of God—encouraging them to listen to the truths of Christ—if thus, by any means, we may win them to that *personal holiness*, in order to which there has been vouchsafed to them, as freely and not more undeservedly than to ourselves, their *relative sanctity*. This, indeed, is a principle which, though in all ages recognized and acted on by the general church of Christ, has yet too often been rejected, sometimes through spiritual simplicity, sometimes through spiritual pride, by inconsiderate and self-willed individuals or parties in the church. The Montanists of the second century—the Novatians of the third century—the Paulicians of the seventh century—the Cathari of the twelfth century—the Anabaptists of

the sixteenth century—the Seceders of some five and twenty years ago—and the so-called Plymouth brethren of the present day, are all of them instances of that want of Christian love, and that withdrawal from the communion of the saints, which result from overlooking, or denying, the Scriptural sense of the term “Saints” as including *all who have been consecrated to the Lord*, and who, in virtue of that consecration, are entitled to our Christian sympathy, fellowship, and beneficence. And yet surely Scriptural example, ecclesiastical practice, Christian principle and feeling, all concur to teach us that the very nature of a Christian church, and the very end for which Christ designed such a society, not only permit, but most imperatively demand, that there should exist a *Christian Fellowship* in all matters which relate to religious privilege and worship, among the converted and the unconverted, the spiritual and the carnal; just so far and just so long, as they together assent to the same faith; and submit to the same ordinances, and reverence the same Lord.

For, what does *Scripture example* tell us on this point? The very first account of the very first Christian community,—the Apostolic Church in Jerusalem—seems to afford to this question a sufficient answer. “All that believed” says St. Luke “*were together*,”—and they continued daily *with one accord*, *i. e.* as one body or community, “in the temple; and in breaking bread from house to house.” Acts ii. 44, 46. And it would be far too much to assume that all this multitude were at once and already possessed of that degree, or even kind, of spirituality, which the Purist in religion demands as the condition of his joining in the offices of prayer and praise. The *degrees* of faith in those first converts, so suddenly shaken into compunction and alarm, and seeking to “save themselves from the untoward generation round them”

must have been various. And even the very *kind* of faith, (external or internal—mental only or spiritual—that of conviction merely, or that of thorough regeneration of the heart) which brought them to the Apostles and to Baptism, must have been, as it is in every considerable body of persons, at every period of religious excitement, different.* The depth of their repentance—the sincerity of their piety—the thoroughness of their conversion—who was able or entitled to judge of? “Some men’s sins,” as St. Paul warns Timothy, “*follow after*” the judgment we have formed of them—not till occasion offers is it disclosed, perhaps even to themselves, of what spirit they are of. And we actually know, from subsequent occurrences, that in this earliest church were those whose hearts were not right in the sight of God. And yet we read expressly that “they were all together;” and “continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine, *and in fellowship*,” *i. e.* in Christian intercourse and communion,† “and in breaking of bread, *and in prayers*.” Acts ii. 42.

But more than this. The next account which occurs of this same church affords us positive proof of its mixed character. For though we are told, Acts iv. 32, that “the multitude of

* “The very vehemence of the impulse created on this occasion might easily carry along with it many in whose minds there was little depth of soil—little of that spirit in which the divine seed could take deep root, and grow up and expand into full formed piety.” See NEANDER, *Geschichte der Pflanz: der Christl. kirche* i. 28, 29.

† κοινωνία, from the context, must here indicate *the general exercise of Christian intercourse*. Neander, i. 30. So also Grotius, and Bengel. Breaking of bread, and prayer, are given as *instances* of this communion; because it was in the participation of food, and of devotion, that men specially showed their friendship and unity. See Acts xi. 3. Luke xviii. 11. (where σταθεὶς πρὸς ἑαυτὸν must surely, (notwithstanding the objections collected by Blomfield) mean “standing apart by himself,” to avoid all risk of contamination by the vicinity of the despised publican. For πρὸς in this construction see Matthiæ, *Gk. Gr.* 591. η. (πρὸς δεξιὰν αὐτοῦ στάς, Eur. Or. 475) and 578. α. “having taken himself apart, to himself”).

them that believed were of one heart and of one soul" (speaking, that is, *generally*); "neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common;" yet we learn directly after that *among this multitude* there was an Ananias, and a Sapphira. Nor is there any hint that any one *separated*, or ought to have separated *from the church*, on account of their presence therein, though they themselves were punished (but that miraculously) *in the church*. While even among those who still remained unvisited by public censure, a spirit of murmuring soon arose, "of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration." Acts vi. 1. And when we go on further, to the church which was in Samaria, (Acts viii.) we find there a Simon whose gross hypocrisy the Apostles indignantly unmasked, and whose thoroughly unconverted state they solemnly warned him of; and yet there is no mention of their *excommunicating him*; still less of other Christians *withdrawing from the church* because of him; but on the contrary there is the touching, tender admonition of St. Peter to him, even in his bitterness and iniquity, "Repent of this thy wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee;" and there is the response of Simon, which shows that he still relied upon their Christian sympathy and compassion, "*Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me!*"

But look next to the churches founded, or ruled over, by St. Paul. What find you here? The most open censures, the most alarming warnings, relating to many members of those churches;—the indignant question to the Corinthians, for example, "Whereas there is among you envying and strife, and divisions, *are ye not carnal*, and walk as men? *i. e.* as men of the world—like the unconverted round you?—the

wondering exclamation, again, to the Galatians, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel;"—yea, the solemn warning, "If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another:"—and yet, so far from a word or hint that purer Christians are to *separate themselves into a private worship* because of these enormities in the general body, there is on the contrary the express injunction, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, *ye which are spiritual* restore such an one *in the spirit of meekness*; considering thyself lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man *think himself to be something when he is nothing*, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden." Gal. vi. 1—6.

But then, perhaps, it will be answered, Not so, however, with the Corinthians. These, the Apostle expressly censures for not exerting a salutary discipline, by putting away from themselves a wicked person. To which we must reply, first, that the point we are now considering is not the duty of a church to exercise a proper discipline to the extent of its power; but the duty of *individual members of that church* towards all who still (whether rightly or wrongly) are continued in communion with it. The question is not what the public officers of a Christian community should attempt for its purification; but how the private members of that community should feel and act towards it, even if it be not pure. Paul might direct the church of Corinth to assemble together and judge concerning the adulterous person, but he does not direct the purer members of that church to *put themselves out therefrom* till such ecclesiastical judgment was pronounced and

executed. The exercise of Christian discipline by a competent authority is one thing, the duty of Christian unity and church fellowship in those who are under that authority, is quite another.

But secondly, to come more immediately to the particular case. *On whom* was that sentence of excommunication in the Corinthian church required by St. Paul? And *by whom* was it to be pronounced and put in force? *ON* whom? Not on one whose *spirituality* simply—nay, or whose conversion—was a matter of suspicion; but on one who by *notorious crime, before the world*, had openly disgraced the Christian name. Not on one concerning whom the whisper had gone round, “We doubt if he be a child of God, and how then can we join with him in prayer and sacramental rites;” but on one who by his moral delinquency had himself called loudly on the church to ratify that self-excision from their body, which by his manifest irreligion he had virtually perpetrated. But more than this: *BY* whom was this excommunication to be pronounced? *Not by individual members of the church against an individual*—still less by those individual members *committing schism and seceding from the body*, because another individual member had committed fornication and defiled the body;—but *by the whole community, as a Church*, in solemn conclave, with the needful circumspection, deliberation, prayer: yea, and this too, not from their own authority merely, but under the presidency of the inspired Apostle himself, considered as present with them in their spiritual court.* “For I verily, as absent in body, but *present in spirit*, have judged

* “Vult rem agi in conventu publico, ut omnes gravitatem peccati, adeoque justitiam pœnæ, agnoscerent. Nec tamen multitudo eum excommunicabat, nisi approbando et suffragando.” ESTIUS “Ut intelligamus concilium illud ex tribus constare; ex Pauli decreto, ex consensu multitudinis, ex auctoritate Christi.” ERASMUS.

already concerning him who hath done this deed, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, *and my spirit*, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan." 1 Cor. v. 3—5. And therefore to this solemn *act of the community*, as a church, not of individuals, on their own responsibility, in that church, we must refer what he says directly after, "I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner ; with such an one no not to eat." For this is manifest by the Apostle's own reference to their obedience to this injunction, in his Second Epistle (ch. ii. 6) ; "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted by many," *i. e.* by the multitude of the believers acting as a public and judicial body. The authority to exercise discipline lies in the Church itself. "If thy brother trespass against thee," says our Lord, when private remonstrance has been ineffectual, "tell it to *the Church* ; and if he will not *hear the Church*, then let him be to thee as an heathen man and a publican." It is only when the Church has spoken, that the individual members of that Church must act, according to her decision. And just so does our thirty-third Article declare, "That person which by *open denunciation of the Church* is rightly cut off from the unity of the Church, and excommunicated, ought to be taken of the whole multitude of the faithful as an heathen and publican, until he be *openly* reconciled by penance, and received into the Church *by a Judge that hath authority thereunto*." But never is it intimated that if ever the Church, whether from neglect, or from necessity, omits this discipline, its individual members are thereby obliged, or authorized, to act upon their own responsibility, contrary to the Church. This would be like a private citizen complaining that the courts of justice are negligent, or dilatory, or partial, and

therefore taking the law into his own hands. It is nothing less than making Lynch law in the territory of Christ.

For, take another instance, which shows how, in that same church of the Corinthians, the greatest disorders were existing, and yet the Apostle counts those who were guilty of them as still relatively "saints," and to be treated as such. In his Second Epistle, ch. vi. he is reproving those who kept up still their intercourse with the heathen, at their festivals; and he exhorts them, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." And yet, does he at once strip them of their Christian privileges, for this inconsistency? Nay rather, he still addresses them as his *children*; ("I speak as unto my children," v. 13) and the very argument by which he urges them not to mix themselves with these profanations is based on the assumption that they (inconsistent, guilty, as was their conduct) were still, compared with the heathen with whom they mingled, as righteousness to unrighteousness—as light to darkness—as Christ to Belial—as *the temple of God* to idols; "for ye," he adds, "are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them"—(in conduct, personally, as you have in profession, relatively)—"and be ye *separate*" (and what is being *separate* but being "holy?"—"saints," in character as well as name?) "and touch not the unclean thing,—and cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, *perfecting holiness*"—bringing to its proper consummation in personal excellence what has been begun in relative consecration—"in the fear of God." 2 Cor. vi. 14—vii. 1. Instead of these men being cast out from the church for their heathenish ways, they were to cast away their heathenish ways *because they were in the church*.

Such are some few instances (very few of what might be adduced) of scripture example, with reference to this point of Christian fellowship. It is not needful to detail, in the second place, the *ecclesiastical practice* of all the early Christian communities in this respect. Suffice it to say, they followed the example of the Apostles ; and amidst all their efforts to maintain a rigid discipline, by the institutions of penance, they never pretended to take cognizance of the *personal spirituality* of a man—his being, in their judgment, a *child of God*, as indispensable to communion with him—his constituting one of the elect, in order to his being recognized as a brother and a “ saint ; ”—but on the contrary, looking only to notorious *deeds* of obstinate offenders, they proclaimed and acted on this maxim, (which one would think that no one who had not a divine insight into the souls of men, would wish to controvert,) *The Church does not take cognizance of secret things ;* she has not the prerogative, and therefore not the responsibility, of determining who is, and who is not, a genuine, indubitable, child of God.* Even as the Apostle Paul himself exhorts the Corinthians, “ Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts ; and then shall every man have his award *of God.*” 1 Cor. iv. 5.

But it is more important to observe, in the third place, how the duty of Christian Fellowship with all the Saints is based upon the plainest dictates of *Christian principle and feeling.*

* De occultis non judicat ecclesia. So also Cyprian, Ep. 46. “ Nos, in quantum nobis et videre et judicare conceditur, faciem singulorum videmus, cor scrutari et mentem perspicere non possumus. De his judicat occultorum scrutator et cognitor cito venturus, et de arcanis cordis atque abditis judicaturus. Obesse autem mali bonis non debent, sed magis mali a bonis adjuvari.” See RIDDLE’S *Christian Antiq.* 584.

For what is that feeling which forms the essence of the social life in a Christian church? It is the sense of *brotherhood in Christ*—specifically and emphatically brotherhood *in Christ*. The feeling that, with all our individual distinctions—our varieties of character—our different degrees of unworthiness—our relative merits or demerits—in the eyes of man; yet *in Christ* we all stand on the same footing as dependents on His free compassion—having no hope but in his blood—no standing, none whatever, before God but through his imputed righteousness—and no right to feel that we are among the number of his redeemed, ourselves; or to be recognized as among that number by others; except only as partakers of the wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, which is—not in ourselves but—in *our Lord*. “For as many of you” says the Apostle, “as have been baptized into Christ *have put on Christ*. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are *all one in Christ Jesus*.” Gal. iii. 27, 28. The Christian therefore, looks on all his brethren as “holy” only in Christ—as “saints” only through the purifying blood of Christ; and O what a tender sympathy, what an imperturbable forbearance—what a wide and extensive charity, does this feeling produce! It is like that which impels and nerves the benevolent man to go through all the loathsomeness of a hospital without shrinking—nay and the delicate-minded woman to endure the abominations of a prison with a strong hand laid upon her rising indignation and disgust—because the groans in that hospital, and the grossnesses of that prison, come forth from beings who, with all their misery, and all their degradation, still are *men*—like ourselves—of the same kind—the same race—the same blood. That single thought is the retaining link which holds us in connexion with them when all others have snapped asunder. And so, I say, what our com-

mon relation, through the first Adam, is to the *benevolent* heart ; that our common relation, through the second Adam, is to the *Christian* heart. It overlooks all differences, to go straight forward to that single point of union. It is gentle, patient, easy to be intreated towards personal unworthiness, because it dare not—nay it would not—contract the sphere of its Christian fellowship into a narrower limit than the sphere of its Redeemer's justifying righteousness. The contrary feeling, which leads to so much censoriousness and separation, results from just the contrary mode of viewing those around us ; the looking, namely, at the *personal merits* rather than the *relative sanctity* of our fellow Christians—the making comparison between their apparent worldliness, and irreligion, and unconvertedness, and our own felt superiority in these respects—the being but too ready, in a word, to feel, if not to say, “ Stand by, for I am holier than thou ! ” To all which we can only oppose the Apostolic question, (and it is a searching one for such) “ Who maketh thee to differ from another ? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive ? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it ? ”

But such a Christian spirit not only feels that all are equally sacred in Christ Jesus—and only in him—but also seeks to benefit all thus united to us by one common bond, by the communication to them of the Spirit of our common Lord. And thus, the very defectiveness, for which the Purist in religion would cast out his brethren from church communion, or would withdraw himself, because of them, from that communion—this very defectiveness is a reason to the earnest Christian why he should strive to *keep them in that communion*, and to keep *himself with them* in that communion ;—namely that thus, *by means of that communion*, this their defectiveness may be removed. The Christian church is formed for this

very purpose, that in its purifying atmosphere the spirit of Christ may be inhaled, and the diseases of the soul may be arrested, and men may live. It is not a society of persons *already perfect*; but of those who are brought together *in order to the process of perfectioning*. It is not a society of philosophers, already wise, but of children brought into the school of Christ that they may thus be educated into wisdom. It is not the kingdom of heaven, into which nothing shall enter that defileth, but the training school for the expectants of that kingdom, in which they are to be purified into ultimate meetness for it. And therefore, the more advanced in the Christian life are willing to endure the fellowship of the ignorant and the unconverted, that by the blessing of God upon that very endurance such brethren may be rendered, through the transmission to them of the Spirit of Christ, both wise and good. If you expel men from the church for want of conversion, or if you withdraw yourself from a congregation because you have conversion, and others of its members, you imagine, have it not; then *what is to become of those thus separated from you?* God has ordained that through the communion of spiritual men the Spirit himself should be communicated. He has provided that the vital breath in your soul should breathe itself into the souls of those who now are dead. You are as the electric points in the spiritual atmosphere, from which there radiate heavenly influences. And if you separate these men from you, how can they inhale that vital breath? If you interrupt the relation in which Christ has placed you to them, whence shall they gain the spiritual fire? What says St. Paul concerning even those without the church? "If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, if he be pleased to dwell with her let her not leave him.

For the unbelieving husband is *sanctified*" (made relatively *holy*) "by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is *sanctified* by the husband; else were your children unclean;" (not reckoned among Christ's people;) "but *now are they holy*"—inscribed among the "saints." And how much more therefore should this be our spirit to those *within the church*! How carefully should we remember that we meet together in our Christian assemblies, not simply to *enjoy ourselves together*, but to *do good to each other*: not merely to indulge in devout emotions with brethren of similar fervour, but to be helpers of each other's faith and joy. "As every man hath received the gift so *minister the same one to another*, as good *stewards of the manifold grace of God*."

SECTION III.

CHRISTIAN BENEFICENCE.

THE same concise record of the spirit and proceedings of the first community of Christians, which have furnished us with the first two elements of that Christian CHARITY which realizes "the Communion of Saints," presents to us one more feature of this grace, which shows how full it is of practical Benevolence, as well as of kindly Sympathy, and devotional Fellowship. "All that believed," says St. Luke, "were together, *and had all things common* ; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." Acts ii. 44, 45. And again : "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul ; *neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own* ; but they had all things common.—Neither was there any among them that lacked ; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold ; and laid them down at the Apostles' feet ; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." Acts iv. 32, 34.

Now in these two passages, there is commemorated a certain method of procedure with reference to temporal goods, which cannot be taken merely as a notice of the accidental practice of this one particular church, but which must be looked upon as illustrative of *a general principle* which pervaded it, and which should equally pervade all Christian churches — the principle of Christian BENEFICENCE, as an essential element of that CHARITY, or Brotherly kindness, which is so manifest

and indispensable an evidence of the presence of the Holy Ghost in a community of Christ. Even allowing that just the very precise *method of proceeding* itself, here recorded, were not binding on our imitation; yet clearly *the principle of that proceeding* of which this method is the illustration, must find for itself a similar, if not the same—an equivalent, if not an identical—mode of working itself out into actual life, in every community which would not only confess but realize that important article of the Apostolic faith, “the Communion of Saints.” How needful, therefore, that we understand the real nature of this method of proceeding—how still more needful that in spirit and substance we follow it out!

Yet I need scarcely tell you that the real nature of this method of proceeding has been frequently *misunderstood*. There existed among the Jews, in the time of our Lord, a body of men, called Essenes, who held, (among other notions which indicate more their rigid earnestness than their enlightened judgment,) the doctrine that in a religious brotherhood there should be no distinction of property between man and man, but all, relinquishing entirely their private rights, should be supplied from a common stock. “It is wonderful,” says Josephus concerning them, “to observe the complete community which exists among them. For there is no one to be found among them surpassing the rest in property. For it is a law with them that every one entering into their sect should divide among them, according to rule, his goods; so that throughout the whole community there may be none distinguished on the one hand by the humiliation of poverty, nor on the other by the pre-eminence of wealth; but, the possessions of each being mingled together in a common stock, there should be one property belonging, as to brethren, equally to all.”

And it is, perhaps, the knowledge of this Jewish community

which has influenced many Christians, in all ages, to consider that, in the Apostolic church at Jerusalem, we have an instance of the same principle, adopted by the primitive Christians, carried out into the same practice, and commended thereby to the imitation, if not actually bound upon the conscience, of all who would act out to its full extent the great principle of Christian brotherhood. This notion gave rise, in the fourth century, to those conventual institutions which soon prevailed so generally in the church; in which the brethren, leaving their trades and earthly occupations, and bringing in all their hereditary and acquired possessions to the society which they joined, lived with each other on a common stock, and merged entirely the individual in the community. And the institution, in the eighth century, of Canonries, or Chapters, of Ecclesiastics living in common, was only the application of this same principle more particularly to the clerical order.* The Waldenses, again, applied the principle universally to all Christian persons. And there are not wanting signs of this same mistake, (as of so many similar ones,) among the so-called "Brethren" of the present day. While (just to illustrate how curiously extremes will meet) you find this same community of goods, this pure liberty and equality, this reduction of all to the same level without any distinction, so zealously maintained by Romanists on the one

* These associations were called "Canonries" because the members of them were bound to live according to *Rule*. Or "*Canonici Cathedralæ*," because the bishop was to them as the abbot to a monastery. Whence also their title of "*Monasteria Canonicorum*." That they included the renunciation of private property as well as submission to common discipline appears from the causes assigned for their alteration, in 852, when the Chapter of Cologne was first permitted to have the control of its own property. "*Quod vero communis vita in omnibus ecclesiis pene deficit, desuetudini et defectui adscribendum est, refrigescente charitate, quæ omnia vult habere communia, et regnante cupiditate, quæ non quærit ea quæ Dei sunt et proximi, sed tantum quæ sunt propria.*" Ivo, *Episc. Carnot*: in GIESELER'S *Ch. History*.

hand,—and by Spiritualists, or pure Biblicists, on the other— at the same time one of the principles of the Atheistical Socialists, who think that all common affection consists in common confusion.

Now, in all these instances, the *principle* is right ; the *rule* by which it is sought to carry out that principle is wrong. The *principle* is that of the first church, at Jerusalem ; the *rule* is not that of this church. It was in no wise a *law* of that community that each must strip himself of his property in order to transfer it to his brethren ; though it *was* a *principle* of that community—the principle of Christ their Master,—that each should love his brethren as himself. And in fulfilment of this *principle*, according to the exigency of the particular circumstances in which that church then stood—(made up as it was, for the most part, of destitute individuals, suddenly coming out from the untoward generation round them, and, according to their Lord's injunction, sacrificing the love and care of father and mother, and brother and sister, to become his disciples)—did those few large-hearted brethren who possessed the things of this world gladly give of what they had, to meet the immediate wants of *such among them as required their help*. Their *Principle* was, “ Let no man think that ought which he possesseth is his own, but held in trust by him for the benefit of his brethren also.” But their *Rule* was not, “ Therefore let every man renounce his private rights to make a common equality, and lose in the general community his individual character.” The very terms of St. Luke's description show that this was not the case. The object proposed, according to his account, was to provide that *none among them should lack any thing* ; not that all among them should be equal. And from the produce of the things that were sold there was “ distribution made to every man *according as he had need* ;” not according to any claim of free companionship, share and share

alike. Observe this, I pray you. The *need* of those who had not, was supplied from the superfluity of those who had—not the condition of those who had not, raised by the depression to a common level of those who had.

And what says Peter to Ananias when the latter pretended to be as liberal as others,* but kept back part of what his land had sold for? The words of the Apostle at once decide the question: “Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart, to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, *was it not thine own?* and after it was sold *was it not in thine own power?*” v. 3, 4. That which in one sense, in the sense of benevolent principle and feeling, St. Luke says those first Christians counted *not their own*; (iv. 32) that, in another sense, the sense of property and right to employ it, whether wholly or in part, according to their own judgment, St. Peter says most clearly *was their own*. The selling, therefore, of their lands and houses, and the bringing of the proceeds to the rulers of the Church for distribution among the poorer brethren, this was manifestly an act of *voluntary benevolence*, not of enforced equality;—resulted from the spontaneous impulse of the principle of charity directed to the special exigencies of the moment; not from any *obligation*, imagined or imposed, to strip themselves off to the nakedness of those around them. They might sell or not sell

* It is this ostentation of liberality which St. Paul seems to censure in 1 Cor. xiii. 3, when he says, “though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” Which passage, again, shows that the distribution of alms was not a *necessary* thing, demanded of all; but a voluntary exercise of goodwill. For what merit or distinction could any one claim for doing that which all were *obliged* to do? It is probably against a similar ostentation of liberality without a spirit of charity that the Apostle warns the Romans, ch. xii. 8, 9. “He that giveth, let him do it *with simplicity* ;” without trick and artifice; not for display and selfish motives, but from pure unmingled benevolence. And again, “Let love be *without dissimulation*.”

as they pleased. They might sell or not sell *any part* that they pleased. The principle was bound upon their conscience—and *it is equally so on ours*. The mode of carrying out that principle was left to their individual judgment—and it is equally so to ours. And the very next notice that occurs of this matter, in Acts vi. 1, at once shows that not *generally*, to all the members of the church, as having equal rights, but only *specially*, to those who were in need, was the distribution of these generous contributions made. It was to the *widows*,—for whom there was no husband to *work*—that the daily ministration took place. It was for the supplying them with a *needful daily meal*, (for this is intimated by the expression “serving tables,” vi. 2,) that the Deacons were appointed. While, on the other hand, if you go on to the twelfth chapter of the Acts, v. 12, you will find that “Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark,” a member of this same Jerusalem church, *possessed a house*, to which Peter came when he had been released from prison, and the door of which was opened to him by *her servant*, “a damsel * named Rhoda ;” these facts furnishing one plain instance of property not sold, and labour not dispensed with, and social distinctions not effaced.

The fact is, that the principle of Beneficence exerted itself in the Jerusalem community in a practice very analogous (in kind though not in degree) to that which our ancient poor-boxes in the churches, and our still existing sacramental collections, have carried on to the present day ;—that, namely, of the richer members of the community contributing of their substance to the poorer, as an offering for them in the name of our common Lord, that none among us may lack. And it

* Παιδίσκη, a female servant. Cf. Matt. xxvi. 69. Luke xii. 49, “the men-servants and maidens.” John xviii. 17, “the damsel that kept the door.”

was just the working of this same principle, in a similar manner, which produced the early Christian love-feasts, or common meals of brotherly affection—the public dinners, at the cost of those who could afford them, supplied for the advantage of those who could not. It is such a joint participation of daily food which seems commemorated in Acts ii. 42, 46; “they continued stedfastly in breaking of bread;—and breaking bread from house to house did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.” And it is the ungenerous and indecent conduct of many of the Corinthians at these social meals, the bond at once of Christian communion, and the medium of Christian charity, that St. Paul reproves, when he says, “What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?” (there was personal property!) “Or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not?” (there were the poor of the community, who, not possessing property, should have been gladly welcomed and relieved by them at the feasts of charity!) 1 Cor. xi. 21, 22.

Nor have we a less clear instance of the mode in which the Beneficence of the early Christians was exercised, in the practice for which St. Paul commends the churches of Macedonia, when he says that “to their power, yea, and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves; praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship (*κοινωνίαν*, Rom. xv. 26) of the ministering to the saints,” 2 Cor. viii. 3, 4, which practice, again, he presses on the Corinthians, when he writes to them, “Now concerning the collection for the saints—upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, *as God hath prospered him*, that there be no gatherings when I come.” 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. The *principle* on which this Beneficence was to be exercised he expounds to these same Corinthians, when he says, “I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened,

but *by an equality*, that now at this time *your abundance may be a supply for their want*, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want, that there may be an equality ; as it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over, and he that had gathered little had *no lack*." 2 Cor. viii. 13—15. Concerning which contribution, moreover, he expressly adds, "Let the same be ready as *a matter of bounty*, and not as of covetousness. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give ; not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver." 2 Cor. ix. 5, 7. Can anything show more clearly that there was no rule upon the subject—no general division of property—no obligation, as a condition of church communion, for any one to resign his own possessions into a common stock ? The only appeal which the Apostle makes, to quicken their beneficence, is not to present obligation, but to future accountableness : "This I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." 2 Cor. ix. 6. Even as he writes to Timothy, "Charge them who are rich in this world," (there was then still the distinction between rich and poor, in the Church of Ephesus also,) "that they be not high-minded nor trust in uncertain riches ; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, (*κοινωνικῶς*) laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." 1 Tim. vi. 17—19.

The "community of goods," then, which existed in the Apostolic Christian churches, was *a communication of all needful aid*, to all the brethren, according to the exigencies of time and place, and circumstance. Each separate community formed a common fund for the relief of its poorer members. And all the communities were excited to contribute to the wants of their sister churches, in proportion as the balance

of prosperity on the one side and of destitution on the other required. Hence the distribution made in the church of Jerusalem "to every man according as he had need." And hence the contributions solicited from the more opulent Gentile churches, for the help of this same destitute Hebrew community. Gal. ii. 10. Rom. xv. 25, 26.

And O that while we hold right views of the *nature* of this "community of goods," we were equally filled with all the fervour of the *principle* from which it flows ! The principle, that no one may say that ought of the things which he possesseth is *his own* ! The conviction, that whatsoever, in God's good providence, is vouchsafed to us, is so vouchsafed to us, not for our independent and self-willed use, but as *stewards*; for distribution among our fellow-men, according to the urgency of the demand which their necessities, whether spiritual, moral, or corporeal, make upon us. For all is given us by God. And given, too, under this condition—devised to us, as it were, with this rent-charge on the estate—that we pay out due allowances to the less well provided members of the family of Christ. The duty of communicating, being imposed upon us by that same deed which conveys to us the right of enjoying, the blessings which our common Father makes over to us. Even, therefore, that which we use for ourselves (1 Tim. vi. 17), and that which we reserve for our children (2 Cor. xii. 14), (though both are lawful,) we must use, and we must reserve, not as our absolute private right but as allowed to us by the divine Lord paramount of all, just to such an amount, and just for such a period, as is consistent with a due regard to the welfare of the other members of that same body of which we form a part. The individual must not, indeed, renounce his individuality; but he must exercise that individuality only in harmony with the general good. Private rights and public must coincide.

There are, indeed, two distinct views of society. The one a false and fanatical one. The other, that of Christ and his Apostles. The one treats men as things;—mere units in an aggregate mass; as in the Spartan commonwealth—the conventual societies—the schemes of modern spiritual Brotherhood, and most unspiritual Socialism. The other treats men as persons;—responsible members of an organized whole. The one, therefore, destroys all distinctions of character, station, rights, and property. The other demands that these distinctions shall be held in subservience to the general good;—nay shall be made to work together to its increase. With the Socialist, who denies all personal responsibility, community of goods,—community of every thing even as the herds of unreasoning animals—is but consistent. With the monkish ascetic, who merges the will of the individual in the will of the community, making obedience and self-abnegation the height of Christian virtue, the community of goods is still consistent. But with the Christian—who feels himself though one of a body of men, yet still a self-governing individual, *accountable direct to God* for his particular gifts, such community cannot consist. For the Christian “Communion of Saints” is not a fusing all separate wills into one general will—so that no judgment shall be exercised, no act shall be performed, no right shall be enjoyed, but by the church: but it is the joint action of all separate wills in harmony with the ends presented by the general will; so that all the faculties and energies of the individual shall be consecrated to the welfare of the community. It is not, therefore, the renouncing our rights, possessions, and powers; but it is the holding those rights, possessions, and powers, as entrusted to us for the benefit of others as ourselves. “All things are lawful for me,” says the Apostle, “but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful but all things *edify not*. Let no man seek his own but every man another’s welfare.” 1 Cor. x. 23, 24.

And hence arises our awful responsibility. Just from this fact, that there is no *Rule* in the Christian church, for “Community of Goods;” and yet that there is a *Principle*, which, if properly followed out, will make us hold our several possessions as *not our own*, but as made over to us *in common* with our brethren,—just from this fact springs the solemn necessity for every Christian to ask himself, What am I about, in this particular of Christian Charity? what is my principle, and practice, with reference to this essential element of that Charity, BENEFICENCE? The less *external* the obligation under which we lie, the more need is there of internal self-examination. Because the *nature and measure* of the benevolence which we should exercise are left so much to our own personal judgment, and this judgment is so much in danger of being warped by the selfishness of our fallen nature, and by the custom of our fellow-men. And is it not so warped? Are not our charities regulated far too much by what is expected from us—than by what we really are able, with due self-denial, to give? I fear that what we yield to our brethren is more of the nature of a quit-rent—a pepper-corn acknowledgment—of our holding under God, that we may be left undisturbed in the enjoyment of the vastly disproportionate remainder; than from the full, free, impulse of a generous brotherly kindness. What would you think of one who, in a grievous famine, having a vast store of corn, should dole out some few bushels to the perishing, but still keep the mass of it locked up, because it was “his own?” And what then shall we think of the Christian who, amidst the pressing demands which—not his brethren only, but his God, to whom he owes his all, is making, for the relief of the indigent—the encouragement of the industrious—the education of the ignorant—the pastoral care of the spiritually destitute—the conversion of the sinful—the enlightening of the heathen—the *doing good*

in all its various forms throughout the earth,—shall satisfy himself with just decently *yielding to entreaty*, not his house and lands, nor even one single comfort that he would really miss, but merely the overflowings of his superfluity? We are stewards of God, remember! We are legatees under the will of Christ our departed Lord! And in that will there is no clause more clear than this—“ I give and bequeath to you every blessing, with this proviso, that you take care of the other members of my family—that you count your possessions ‘ common ’ to all for whom I have shed my blood. I prescribe not the portion each must have, but *I commit them to your guardianship*. To your cordial sympathy—to your deliberate judgment—to your zealous watchfulness, I *entrust their interests*, on your solemn responsibility as you value your eternal salvation! ‘ For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.’ ‘ This is my commandment, That ye love one another as I have loved you? ’ ”

SECTION IV.

CHRISTIAN CHARITY A WORK OF THE HOLY GHOST.

WE have seen now that in confessing in our Creed “the Communion of saints” we are acknowledging our obligation to abound in one of the three cardinal graces of Christianity, CHARITY, or LOVE. And this too in its threefold manifestation as Christian Sympathy—Christian Fellowship—Christian Beneficence, towards all our brethren in the Lord.

But this “Communion of saints” is set forth to us, in the Creed, in connexion with the holy Catholic Church, as the sphere in which the Spirit of God fulfils his office. We have therefore still to see how this Charity, or brotherly love, is specially A WORK OF THE HOLY GHOST IN THE MEMBERS OF CHRIST. It is no mere natural disposition, but a divinely infused grace; and its developement therefore must be fostered in us by devout and sedulous culture.

First, *It is no mere natural disposition, but a divinely infused grace.*

For this charity of which we have been treating is not merely that constitutional *good-heartedness*—that kindliness of temper—which is sometimes,—nay and often,—the accompaniment of a well-balanced physical organization, and spreads the charm of its hilarity (even unmarked by the happy possessor of it) over every person and thing with which it comes in contact. This is most winning. It is an inestimable natural gift. It may be made the handmaid of the highest Christian grace. It will shed the fragrance of its balmy breath over all

the intercourse of social life. But it is not that deliberate, steady, *principle* of benevolence which the Scriptures mean by Charity, or Love.

Nor will this principle be found in that *prudential good-fellowship* which, in the ordinary commerce of society so often and so well stands substitute for that natural amiableness. No one who mixes with his fellow-creatures can long be ignorant that to receive from them attentions and beneficence he must himself be towards them attentive and beneficent; that society is a sort of joint-stock company to which if any one do not contribute his own share, and pay up his calls, he has no claim upon a beneficial interest in the shares of other men; that self-will, and moroseness, and an overbearing temper will work for him their proper punishment by freezing up the heart of those towards whom they are exercised; and consequently, that even as a matter of *self-interest*—as a necessity established by the law of social reciprocity, he who is not prepared to make continual sacrifices of self—nay and assiduously to cultivate the good-will of his companions—must be content to withdraw himself from their society into the undignified seclusion of his own sufficiency. And hence there is an amount of mastership over self—of readiness to help and gratify others—of prudent forgetfulness of the individual in the community,—acquired in social intercourse, which shows both how indispensable such a disposition is to the very existence of society, and also to what an extent it may be cultivated when a sufficient motive operates. The self-forgetfulness, self-control, yea even self-renunciation exercised in polished life, might put to shame many a spiritual man. But still, this is not that Charity, or Love, of which the Scriptures speak.

Neither is this Christian disposition supplied by those higher feelings of *grateful affection*, of which the heart is

susceptible towards those who show us kindness. Such affection is indeed a lovely feeling, and it communicates a warmth and sweetness to social intercourse, inestimable. But still, the more narrowly you examine it the more you will discover that it has not the hardiness to bear up under chilling blasts, which marks a genuine benevolence. The heart the most sensible of kindness is just that which is the most sensible also of its withdrawal, or decay. It has a warmth which may be kindled easily to evil as well as good. And the glow of gratitude for affection accorded, may but too readily give place to the fire of resentment for affection denied. And if indeed it be true that persons cannot keep on loving one another, in this sense, without some reciprocity, some perception, or at least imagination, of return; this at once shows the selfish ground in which the warmest affection has its base. "If ye love them only which love you, what thank have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?"

Nor must we give the name of genuine Christian love to even the most generous sympathies of *purest friendship*. For this, too, comes from recognizing in another either the reflection, or the supplement, of ourself. It springs from, and it is sustained by, similarity of sentiment, and feeling, and pursuit; or else diversity just to such extent, and just in such particular points, as helps to fill up the deficiencies of our own character, and enables us to find in conjunction with another that *completeness* which we have not in ourselves. True there is much that is noble in this reciprocity of mind with mind, and heart with heart. True it is the solace of existence—the refreshment of the soul—the parent of high thoughts and lofty deeds. But still it is not that heaven-born temper which the Bible speaks of as the mark of a child of God. One single criterion is enough to settle the question as regards all these feelings. Was the *love of Jesus* towards

mankind — was the “charity so dear” which warmed the bosom of the Son of God—the offspring of either natural amiableness only—of prudential courteousness—of reciprocal affection—of pure esteem? Was there any thing in the nature of that deliberate self-sacrificing love similar to the first two of these qualities? Was there any thing in the nature of the beings whom he loved that could develope or deserve the last two?

Nor, then, is the love to which the Christian is called the unconscious overflow of a kindly temperament—or the laboured product of a well-taught prudence—or the soft melting of a sensitive nature—or even the well pleased homage of a devoted friendship; but it is the offspring of *a new principle* infused into the soul and working itself forth into the life;—a principle derived from altogether new views of our fellow-creatures, and of our relation to them;—a principle which has power to supply the deficiency of natural kindness, yea to counteract the opposite temper; which works from motives far above the calculations of our social interest; which not merely without gratitude can be quickened, but against ingratitude can live on; and which expands to embrace a sphere far wider than the sympathies of friendship, and the confined devotedness of congenial minds. It is the principle which St. John propounds to us when he says, “This commandment have we from him, That he who *loveth God* love his brother also.” 1 John iv. 24. It is the principle which the same Apostle presses to an extent which nothing merely human will ever reach; “hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to *lay down our lives* for the brethren.” 1 John iii. 16. It is the principle which actuated Paul not *for*, but clean *against*, his personal interests, yea, and his best affections; as he tells the Corinthians, “I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, *though the more*

abundantly I love you, the less I be loved!" 2 Cor. xii. 15. And accordingly it is a principle which St. John, again, recognizes as an indispensable, and at the same time a sufficient, evidence of *a new nature planted in us*—a birth from above—an infusion from God himself. "For love is *of God*, and every one *that loveth is born of God*, and knoweth God." 1 John iv. 7. Pause for a moment on that remarkable declaration. Can human amiableness, or courteousness, or tenderness, or friendship claim for itself to mark out its possessor as indubitably a child of God? Are not each, and even all, these amiable dispositions found in those who in many other ways proclaim that they know not God? Are not some of the most intense actings of the most winning of those dispositions too often indulged in at the expense of all that pleases God? And yet love—true love as a Christian grace—is given as an unequivocal proof of piety—is set forth as the very breath of God himself in the soul. "If we love one another *God dwelleth in us*, and his love is perfected," works itself out to view in manifest developement, "in us!" 1 John iv. 12.

In a word then, this disposition is none other than *the disposition of Christ himself*. It is "the mind which was in him," (Phil. ii. 5)—the temper purely spiritual in its origin and exercise—the free, gratuitous, and unconquerable Charity,—which brought down from the heights of glory the Eternal Son of God, to make himself of no reputation, to take upon himself the form of a servant, to be made in the likeness of men, to become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, because—and purely because—"he loved his own and loved them *even to the end!*" O how different this in kind from every other amiable emotion! "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died *for the ungodly!* For scarcely for *a righteous* man will one die; though perad-

venture for a good man some would even dare to die ; but God commendeth his love towards us" (displays its glory beyond all other kinds of kindness) " in that *while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.*" Rom. v. 6—8. O to feel this divine love as it is exercised towards ourselves, that we may be impelled the more to exercise it towards our fellow sinners ! O to understand how *He* has first loved us, that thus, imbued with the disposition we adore, we too may love our God and love our brother also !

But since true Christian love is nothing less than the disposition of Christ himself, infused into our soul, you see now how, and why, its birth and sustenance within us must be looked on as *a work of the Holy Ghost in the members of Christ.* We have seen, in a former chapter, how it is the special office of this Divine Being *to make Christ himself present in his people.* And this he does by forming and fostering in them *the mind which was in Christ ;*—the same dispositions in kind (though alas, far short in *degree*) which characterized the spirit of that perfect—that divine—man. Christian Charity, therefore, is nothing less than the love which dwelt in Christ ; and the Author and Sustainer of this Charity is no other than He whose office it is to form Christ in our souls, in all his human and communicable graces.

And hence this grace of Love is so constantly ascribed in Scripture expressly to the Holy Ghost. "The fruit of the Spirit" says St. Paul, "is Love." Gal. v. 22. The love, too, which he presses on the Philippians he calls emphatically "the fellowship of the Spirit"—a fellowship or communion of the saints, produced, sustained, enjoyed by the co-presence of the Spirit of Christ in each and all. Phil. ii. 1.* The affec-

* κοινωνία πνεύματος. Si inter vos ipsos, et inter vos et me, vere sit κοινωνία spiritualis, sub uno capite, Christo, per unum Spiritum, conciliata. ZANCHIUS.

tion, again, by which he urges the Romans to pray for him, he calls, just similarly, "the love of the Spirit." * Rom. xv. 30. And the zeal which warmed his own heart in his ministerial calling, and which he sought to stir up, in the languid Timothy, towards the perishing souls around him, he ascribes to the same source—"God hath not *given us the spirit* of fear, but of power, and of LOVE." 2 Tim. i. 7. While the close connexion between the energetic presence of the Holy Ghost and this uncalculating, and therefore unhesitating, love for our fellow sinners, is shown in another place by the mere juxtaposition of the terms of the Apostle's rapid eloquence,—"approving ourselves the ministers of God, by *long suffering*, by *kindness*, by *the Holy Ghost*, by *love unfeigned*." 2 Cor. vi. 6.

But when we thus read of Charity as an infusion of the Holy Ghost, is it thereby intended that this grace will be enjoyed by us without that earnest seeking and that watchful care which God expects from us as to all his gifts?

No! For the Scriptures equally show to us (and this is the second particular which in this section we press) that *the development of this grace in us must be fostered by devout and sedulous culture.*

For it is no self-developing, or self-maintaining energy, of which we speak;—as if we had nothing to do but, having received the gift of God, to lie idle and let it work. It is, like all his gifts to sinful man, exposed to too much opposition both from within ourselves, and from the world without us, to allow of this. "The grace of God in the heart of man"

* *i. e.* The love infused by the Spirit into the members of Christ; Christian love; Brotherly kindness. "Mutua illa conjunctio quâ Spiritus Sanctus animos nostros devinxit; quam vocat communionem Spiritûs, Phil. ii. 1, unde Christiana illa *συνπάθεια*. BEZA.

says Archbishop Leighton, "is a tender plant in a strange unkindly soil; and therefore cannot well prosper and grow without much care and pains, and that of a skilful hand and that hath the art of cherishing it."

And do you ask How? By what means? must I foster this heavenly grace? I answer, first, by cherishing towards your brethren a *sacred reverence* as towards children of God. I do not say "respect," because that word is far too tame and cold to express that feeling, little short of awe, with which, I think, each Christian should regard his brethren, as consecrated to the service, yea received into the family, of the Lord of Hosts. We are accustomed to look with reverence on *places*, and on *things* which are counted "holy." Shall we not extend this feeling towards every *person* who has been brought into so sacred a relation with our heavenly Father, as that which is implied, nay proclaimed, in his being a member of "the *holy* Catholic Church?" "I have *tried*" said the loving Wilberforce, "this principle of looking out for and expecting something responsive to affection in all my brethren; I have *tried* this untiring determination to discover in every one something that would *ring* of genuine feeling; and never but in two instances, through a long life, did I even *seem* to fail." And O how ready would such a feeling make us to concede to our brethren privileges which we claim for ourselves;—to believe that they too, as well as we, may possess some influences of the Spirit of God;—to regard even their differences of sentiment, or of conduct, from ourselves, as differences with which no one but our common Father has to do. "Let not him that eateth *despise* him that eateth not, and let not him that eateth not *despise* him that eateth; for God hath received him." Rom. xiv. 3.

But next, in order to the nourishment of Christian Charity, cherish a *patient forbearance* towards your brethren, as members of Christ. "Walk worthy," says St. Paul, "of the vocation wherewith ye are called; with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, *forbearing one another in love*, endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit *in the bond of peace*." Eph. iv. 1—3. That social harmony, that "communion of saints" which results from the presence of the Spirit in each and all, can be preserved from disruption, can be kept compact, only by throwing around it the bond of a *peaceful*, gentle, forbearing temper. And how can such a temper be maintained so effectually as by keeping in our mind, and skilfully bringing out continually to view, *our common relation to one gracious Master*: repeating to ourselves with patient steadiness the wondrous thought how Christ who has borne with our unworthiness is bearing also with the sins of those around us whom we least approve. I know no one recollection so efficient to save us from angry impatience with erring brethren;—from hasty throwing up our hopes concerning them;—from iron-hearted readiness to cast them out from us at once as heretics or reprobates;—as this one touching truth, *for such, Christ died!* Such, Christ himself has not yet given up! to such, Christ continues opportunities of mercy, invitations of compassion! such, Christ may by his secret power convert from monuments of wrath into monuments of grace! *

* How consonant with such a feeling is the advice of Æcolampadius to Farel. "Learn to temper the boldness of the lion with the gentleness of the dove. Men may be led, but will not be driven. Let it be our one object to gain souls to Christ: and let us consider in what manner we ourselves should wish to be instructed if we were yet in darkness, and under the bondage of Antichrist. Endeavour to exhibit the very image of Christ in your life; I mean now, especially, by copying him as a teacher. He was indeed severe towards the Pharisees—a race of men who were deaf to reproof: though even

Does such a patience seem to tolerate error?—sacrifice the interests of holiness?—weaken discipline? But was St. Paul the man to do all this? And yet what says St. Paul concerning, not erroneous simply, but even malignant, opposers of truth and holiness? (O exquisite passage! O touching exhibition of the spirit of Christian love!) “The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be *gentle unto all men*; apt to teach, *patient*, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, *if God peradventure will give them repentance* to the acknowledgment of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will!” 2 Tim. ii. 24—26. Alas! we are too apt to feel towards people *as they present themselves to our present perceptions*; without any thought of what, through God’s good Spirit, *they may become*. We are too apt to count them as *enemies*, while still God keeps them among us as brethren; instead of treating them as brethren, even when they show themselves enemies. There is some worth in that political rule: Live with your enemies as with men who may one day become your friends. There is a worth in it if we baptize it;—if we transform it from a maxim of political prudence into a *law* of Christian forbearance. If we word it, —Let not their *personal*, efface to you their *relative*, character. Let not the frown upon their countenance altogether hide from you the cross upon their brow! Then will your vexation at their errors;—your disapprobation of their defects;—yea your abhorrence of their sinfulness;—take the

to them he was not so harsh as some make his words in Matthew xxiii. to exhibit him: but he conveyed some things through the medium of lamentation over sinners, some in the way of warning, some in an attractive and even entertaining form; so that scarcely ever was his kindness more apparent than when he was surrounded by malignant and insidious enemies. A word to the wise. I know that you would wish to be a skilful surgeon, not a butcher.” SCOTT’S *Swiss Reformation*, p. 186.

character, the sacred, tender character, of *a brother's feeling towards a brother's guilt*: no blazoning of faults—no exaggeration of delinquency—no exasperating of their feelings—no triumphing over their mistakes and degradation—above all, no hasty shutting of the door of penitence, and barring out return—but, even your very protests against them made with all the feeling (though also with all the faithfulness) of the Apostle; “I tell you *even weeping* that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ!” Phil. iii. 18.

But once more. Let brotherly love be fostered by cherishing with our fellow Christians a *cordial confidence*, as with partakers of the same Spirit. Take off as large a number as you will, whom we must respect mainly for their relation to our common Father;—or bear with chiefly for their relation to our common Saviour;—yet still, how goodly a band remains in whom we may recognize the *actual indwelling of a common Spirit*—the Spirit of God—and who therefore, even with all the imperfections, in their various degrees, of the old man, still defiling them, demand from us a *cordial confidence*, as temples of the Holy Ghost. The very notion of “communion” includes in it confidence. The very word “fellow” is made up of “fe” which signifies “faith,” and “lay,” or “low” which means “bound;” and hence to be the “fellow” of another is to be bound with him in the bonds of a common confidence. A “fellowship” or society of men cannot hold together without *mutual faith and trust*. And whom shall we trust, if not the man in whom there breathes the Spirit of God? From whom shall we expect reciprocation of a spiritual charity, if not from him who is bound with us in the ties of a common spiritual life? The “community” of a village, of old, comprised (as it indicated) all

who resorted to *the same common fountain*. Let the "community" of saints comprise all who drink of the same common Spirit !

And here then lies the secret of a Christian Charity. Let each one make it a subject of *sedulous culture*—an object of effort, watchfulness, care. "*Endeavouring*" says St. Paul "to keep the unity of the Spirit." Eph. iv. 3. "*Follow after Charity*," he says again. 1 Cor. xiv. 1. "*Let us follow after the things that make for peace*," he exhorts elsewhere ; (Rom. xiv. 19 ;) pursue them, (that is,) with untiring diligence—track their flying steps with earnest perseverance. Skill, patience, management, these are indispensable to Love. You must keep it always in view ;—throw forward towards it your best energies ;—press close upon it, notwithstanding it so often eludes your grasp ;—*make prey* of the shy and difficult grace. And in order to this be much in prayer. For others, as for yourself, be much in prayer. Unite your brethren with your own mind before the throne of God, and you will find yourself wondrously united to them in actual life. Diffuse around each thought of them the incense of prayer, and you will find their presence softened to you as by an atmosphere of Love. The more we pray for others, the more we plead for the development of what is good in them : and the more we thus fix our thoughts on what is good in them, the more shall we nourish hope concerning them, and exercise care for them : and the more we nourish hope concerning any one, and exercise care for him, assuredly the more we shall "with a pure heart, fervently," *love* him. Nor can we, further, nourish and strengthen the Spirit in our own hearts without finding that Spirit breathe itself out from us in love. The most affectionately devout towards God have ever been the most candid, patient, cordial, towards their brethren. The stronger the Spirit in your soul, the more ready your affinity with the Spirit in

your brother's soul. You will find you share with him not only "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," but "one God and Father of all, who is above all, and *through all, and in all.*" And thus with the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ—and the love of God—you will enjoy together "*the communion of the Holy Ghost !*"

CHAPTER VII.

CHRISTIAN FAITH.

WE have seen in a former chapter that the several Articles of the Christian faith, as commemorated in each main division of the Apostles' Creed, are not isolated truths ; but bear relation to the work of the divine Person, with the confession of whom that division begins. In the first division we profess our faith in God the Father ; and in the character which he sustains, and the works which he accomplishes, as the Maker of us and all the world. In the second division we profess to believe in God the Son ; and in the series of doings and sufferings which he went through as the Redeemer of us and of all mankind. And, just similarly, in the third division, the belief which we avow is not, first and separately, in God the Holy Ghost ; and then, as unconnected points of faith, in a holy catholic church ; and so on ; but in God the Holy Ghost as the Author, *within the sphere of that church*, of those moral dispositions which it is his office to produce and sustain as the Sanctifier of us and of all the elect people of God.

Now, these moral dispositions, we have seen, are comprehended under the three cardinal Christian graces of Charity, and Faith, and Hope ; and the subjects of belief enumerated in this part of our Creed, are so enumerated as *forming the objects upon which* our Charity, and Faith, and Hope, *in their*

specific Christian exercise, respectively concentrate themselves. For it is by the *Objects He presents to us*, in conjunction with *the grace that he infuses into us*, that the Holy Ghost works these moral dispositions. Our duties grow out of our relations; the knowledge of these duties results from the knowledge of those relations; and the power for these duties must be sought from the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, directing and applying our affections towards those relations. The *Charity* of the Christian is that disposition which he is called upon to exercise towards his brethren *around him*, in the "communion of saints." The *Faith* of the Christian is that disposition which he is privileged to cherish towards God *above him*, through "the forgiveness of sins." And the *Hope* of the Christian is that disposition with which he may look forward to the inheritance *before him*, through the animating doctrine of "the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting."

We have arrived now at the second of these Christian dispositions; and have to consider what is the truth which the Holy Ghost presents to the believer, for the nourishment of his *Faith*, in God, *above him*. It is "THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS."

Now it is to be noted that the connexion of this article of the Creed, with the work of the Holy Ghost as carried on in the holy catholic church, is not left to be inferred merely, from the juxtaposition of the clauses; but is, in some of the ancient creeds, expressly affirmed, by the phraseology employed. Cyprian, for example, (in the third century after Christ,) referring to the baptismal interrogatory used in his time, speaks of it as being in substance this:—"Dost thou believe in God the Father, in Christ the Son, in the Holy Ghost, *and in the forgiveness of sins*, and everlasting life,

through the holy church."* And in the Nicene Creed, you will remember, (it is the same in the Ethiopian and several others,) we recite the Article before us in a similar connexion with the initiatory sacrament *of the church*. "I believe *in one baptism for the remission of sins.*" It is, you see, only as being one of Christ's people, that the Christian is assured of the forgiveness of sins. It is only as a member of Christ, that he may look upon himself as a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. The one blessed truth which this article proposes to his faith is that he stands before God relieved from condemnation. But this relation to the Father he owes entirely to that purification by the Son, of which his baptism is the symbol and memorial. And his practical sense of this relation is a work of the Holy Ghost.

Observe, first, that the Christian *stands before God as relieved from condemnation.*

For this is the essence of the doctrine of "the forgiveness of sins." The relation to God, in which we stand by nature, is one of sinfulness—of guilt—of condemnation. The relation which is proposed to our faith is just the reverse of this—a relation of pardon, acceptance, approbation. But it is only as we become sensible of—yea painfully and remorsefully feel—that relation of nature; that we can pass into, or even understand, this relation of grace. All reconciliation to God must take place on condition of renunciation of sin. All acceptance to his favour, under pledge of opposition to his enemies. And all *personal sense* of such reconciliation and acceptance—*i. e.* all living *faith*, must be preceded by *personal exercise* of such renunciation and opposition—*i. e.* by hearty

* "Credis in Deum Patrem, Filium Christum, Spiritum Sanctum, remissionem peccatorum et vitam æternam *per sanctam ecclesiam?*"—CYPRIAN, Ep. 76. 6.

Repentance. A great deal, it is true, is said in Scripture, about God's mercy and compassion. Yet just as much is said in Scripture about man's obligation to repent in order to receive that mercy, and benefit by that compassion. It is not mercy *absolutely*, which is proclaimed. But mercy *to the penitent*. It is not pardon arbitrarily. But pardon to those *who renounce their sins*. The fullest promises of the one are always limited, by the clearest demands for the other.

When, for example, God proclaimed himself to Moses, as "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin;" he expressly added, "but by no means clearing the guilty." * Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. When he said so condescendingly, by Isaiah, to the Israelites, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool," (Isa. i. 18,) what is the context in which that promise is, as it were, imbedded? What is demanded as the proper state of mind for its reception and enjoyment? "Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well;—if ye be *willing and obedient* ye shall eat the good of the land." Isa. i. 16, 17, 19. So, when the Baptist came to point to the Lamb of God as taking away the sin of the world, what was his opening proclamation? "*Repent ye*, and be baptized, for the remission of sins." And when Jesus followed him, preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom, what still was his preliminary demand from all who would rejoice in those tidings? "*Repent ye*, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" He

* *i. e.* Who will not go on for ever sparing those who continue obstinate. GESENIUS. So also ROSENMULLER. "Qui quamvis clemens sit, et peccatorum pœnas remittat, tamen non *semper* peccatorem impunitum dimittet."

came, it is true, "not to call the righteous, but *sinner*s;" —but then it was to call these sinners "*to repentance*." He commissioned his Apostles to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature ;—but then this gospel was, "that *repentance* and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." Luke xxiv. 47. And when Peter, with the rest of the Apostles, stood up on the day of Pentecost, in fulfilment of this mission, to whom did he address himself? To those who "were pricked in their heart, and cried out, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" And what did he enjoin upon them? "*Repent* and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." Acts ii. 37, 38. God's mercy comes forth *freely*, of his own spontaneous will; but that mercy falls not *indiscriminately*. The rays of his compassion stream throughout the heavens; but there must be a certain state of atmosphere on which alone they paint the bow of hope. God's bow is set *in the cloud*. God's mercy is directed towards the weeping penitent. The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. And it is only as we have been exercised in the lessons, and have quailed before the discipline, yea, and have accepted the just sentence, of that law, that we can welcome the good news of grace and truth. Moses must precede Jesus. The sense of guilt, the hope of pardon. The spirit of heaviness, the garment of praise. The renunciation of Satan, acceptance with God. "Let the wicked *forsake his way*, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him *return unto the Lord*, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon!" Isa. lv. 7.

But you will say, that just this repentance, of which we speak, brings with it necessarily all that crouching down in deep humiliation; that shuddering shame when we compare ourselves with God's purity; that foreboding dread when we

think of his justice ; that very sense of *condemnation* in all its present wretchedness and anticipated misery ; which is just the opposite of faith in “ the forgiveness of sins.” “ The more ” (will the thorough penitent complain)—“ the more I know myself ; and know the law of God ; and know my responsibilities under that awful law ; and know my manifold delinquencies, yea my radical corruption and unworthiness ; that is, the more I grow in this repentance which, you say, must be introductory to faith ; the more unable am I to believe—the more impossible it is for me to think—that while I stand before myself condemned I can stand before God relieved from condemnation. I feel that I am guilty—how can I escape the dread of punishment for such guilt ? *Compunction* deepens in me daily—how can the sense of *condemnation*, which with that compunction comes upon me, not be deepened too ? ”

I answer, by most carefully keeping separate those two emotions that you speak of—*compunction*, and the sense of *condemnation*. I know indeed that they are often confounded. I know that from their intimate connexion they are very apt to run into each other. But I assert that it is the Christian’s duty—the Christian *penitent’s* duty—as it is his privilege, to dissolve the union ; and, while he cherishes his compunction, to challenge his sense of condemnation ; and, in the light of the relation in which he stands to God in Christ, to exorcise the foul fiend, till it shrink away, like imps of darkness from the morning dawn.

For consider ; how separable these two emotions are, in *their definition*. By compunction, I mean that deep sense of unworthiness, that self-disapprobation, humiliation, contrition, which are awakened by the perception of self-contradiction ; by comparing what we are with what we ought to be. And by a sense of condemnation I mean that alarm and dread which are awakened by the perception of our having, by this

self-contradiction, broken the laws, and brought ourselves under the awful curse, of the Almighty Governor and Judge. The one results from self-comparison with an Idea which has dawned within us—the other, with a Law which frowns without us. The one from consideration of our *character*, as a whole, falling short of that Idea—the other, of some particulars of our *conduct* which have violated that Law. The one is pained at what we *are*—the other terror-struck at what we *have done*. The one loathes sin—the other dreads the consequences of sin.

And consider, moreover, how separable these two emotions are *in fact*. You have only to recur to some Scripture instances to see how a sense of condemnation may exist without compunction ; and how, on the other hand, a deep sense of unworthiness may pervade the soul without any of the terrors of a sense of condemnation.

See, first, how there may be a sense of condemnation without compunction ;—terror without humiliation ;—dread without contrition. Look at the first guilty pair. They had set before them a positive Law ; “ Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it : for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die ; ” and immediately on the act of transgression of that law there came upon them dread of Him who had given it to them. “ They hid themselves from the presence of the Lord amongst the trees of the garden.” There you behold that sense of condemnation which results from perceived transgression of positive law. But where was their compunction ? their humiliation ? their self-disapprobation ? They attempt to excuse, if not to justify, themselves. They plead, “ The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat ”—“ the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.” So true is it that fear will not produce compunction but only self-justification ; that

while we dread the *consequences* of sin we shall do all we can to keep down the acknowledgment of sin.* The sense of condemnation makes men afraid of God, but not humbled before God. It makes them hate their Judge—but not themselves. It is the feeling of Ahab, “Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?” and not that of Job, “I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes!”

But look now on the other side; and take some instances of the deepest sense of unworthiness, and compunction, unembittered by a sense of condemnation;—of humiliation without terror;—of contrition without dread. Thank God! these instances are numerous! They are found in the Old Testament as well as the New; though they show themselves most clearly under the Gospel of Christ, the good news of “forgiveness of sins.” How deep, for example, the humiliation of Abraham; “Behold I am but dust and ashes!” And yet this same Abraham communes and pleads with God, as with his friend! “Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord!” Gen. xviii. 27. How intense, again, the compunction of the Psalmist; “I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid.” And yet, how complete his confidence in the forgiveness accorded to him; “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity!” Ps. xxxii. 5, 1. How profound, again, the sense of unworthiness of the prophet; “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the

* Nor do I doubt that the speculations about human accountableness, and the readiness to listen to those who would persuade us we are only *things*, not *persons*; acting from necessity, and possessing no responsible free agency, spring from this same source. The *sense of guilt* must be got rid of. What a man feels to be a heavy burden, *in fact*; he seeks to lighten, or if possible cast off entirely, by *theory*.

midst of a people of unclean lips." And yet how effectual was the "live coal from the altar" to "take away his iniquity, and purge his sin"—to free him from all dread of that august presence in which he stood! "Then said I, here am I; send me!" Isa. vi. 5. 8. And where will you find a sense of unworthiness like that of Paul? so deep, so permanent, so tingeing all his views both of himself and of his work. "I am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the church of God!" "I am less than the least of all saints!" "I am the chief of sinners!" And yet, at the same time what trace will you find in him, after his conversion, of a sense of condemnation? Where does there escape a single sentiment which indicates bondage, dread, apprehension? Where, on the contrary, is there *not* the quiet, happy, breathing of a heart reposing unreservedly on God's compassion;—delighting in his favour;—animated with the blessed consciousness of his presence? "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners!" "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." You see the man plainly, throughout all his vicissitudes, as one who had thoroughly "washed away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Acts xxii. 16.

And is not then a genuine compunction a very different thing from sense of condemnation? Must not the first become deepened in us the more we know of ourselves? Ought not the second to be lessened in us the more we know of the grace of God? May not the first exist in all its fulness, when the second is entirely removed? Yea will there not be just so much the more scope for the free expansion of the salutary feelings of the first, in proportion as we are delivered from the deadly workings of the second? For, when will the penitent most feel his unworthiness; but when he considers

the pardoning love of God? How shall we be truly afflicted and mourn, but by looking on Him whom we have pierced? There is no complete repentance without faith; because only faith can enable us to endure that thorough investigation into our depravity which works an entire renunciation of it in all its parts. Remorse there may be: for remorse is the implicit creed of the guilty. But repentance there will not be; for repentance is the self-surrender of the broken heart into the arms of its compassionate God. Like Adam we shall cover our transgressions, by hiding them in our bosom; unless we are encouraged to bring them forth to light—that *they may be blotted out*. Unless there be something which, in the midst of our shivering wretchedness, brings, as it were, long-buried recollections to our mind, and whispers to us, “I have still a *Father!*” we shall not have the heart—the will—to purpose, as the penitent prodigal resolved, “I will arise, and go to *my Father*, and will say unto him, Father I have sinned against heaven and before thee; and am no more worthy to be called thy son!”

And it is then to give the penitent, heart—yea will—to purpose thus — “I will arise and go unto *my Father*,” that there is enshrined in our Creed the blessed truth of “the forgiveness of sins.” — “There is forgiveness with Thee,” says the Psalmist “*that thou mayest be feared;*” *i. e.* be worshipped; served; approached with offerings of homage and obedience. “There is forgiveness with Him,” re-echoes our Creed, that we may yield to him the homage of our *filial* service, and with all our feelings of unworthiness, be yet relieved from a sense of condemnation. “I have sinned against the Lord” said the humbled David. “The Lord hath put away thy sin,” immediately responded the inspired prophet. And *faith in God* is just that act whereby, when deeply conscious of our thorough integrity, we can bring those two facts into juxtaposition, and

though debtors before our Creditor—though criminals before our Judge—though sinners before the Holy One—yet, be at peace !

But, *such a relation to the Father we owe entirely to that purification by the Son, of which our baptism is the symbol and memorial*: this is the second step in our present subject.

This purification was accomplished for us on the cross. What the Jewish sacrifices were to the individual penitent—or, on the day of Expiation, to the self-condemned and mourning nation—that is the sacrifice of Christ to every penitent through every age. He is “the lamb of God, which *taketh away the sin of the world.*” John i. 29. Him, God sent into the world, “not to *condemn* the world, but that the world through him might be saved.” John iii. 17. “He was made sin for us,” (treated as guilty in our stead,) “though he knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God” (treated as *not* guilty) “in him.” 2 Cor. v. 21. “For, him hath God set forth *to be a propitiation*, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness *for the remission of sins that are past.*” Rom. iii. 25. And “in him we have redemption, through his blood, even *the forgiveness of sins*, according to the riches of his grace.” Eph. i. 7.

And O what an object is here placed before the faith of the trembling penitent, to assure him that there is “*no condemnation* to them which are in Christ Jesus!” Rom. viii. 1. How exactly suited to his case ! How condescendingly adapted to his anxious state of mind ! It is easy for the careless worldling to talk of “the mercy of God.” It is easy for the self-sufficient religionist to flatter himself that he is meriting God’s approbation—or, at least, forbearance. But for the man who knows himself—his sinfulness, his guilt, and his desert of condemnation,—where shall be found a warrant for his peace,

whence shall he gain the slightest hope of a “forgiveness of his sins,” but in the cross of Christ? * The cross of Christ is the symbol of salvation for every one who looks thereto in penitence and faith. “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so was the Son of man lifted up, that *whosoever* believeth in him may not perish but have everlasting life.”

And then, for the *memorial* of this fact, and of its atoning, expiating, purifying power—the Lord himself ordained that rite of Baptism, which (like the other sacrament, of His Supper) is, as our 25th Article declares, “not merely a badge or token of Christian men’s profession, but a certain sure witness and effectual sign of *grace and God’s good will to us*, by the which he doth work invisibly in us and doth not only quicken but also *strengthen and confirm our faith in him*.” It is as thus a *sign* of the purification wrought out by the washing of Christ’s blood, and the change thereby of the penitent’s relation to the Father, that the Apostle Peter enjoins it on the awakened sinners on the day of Pentecost—“Repent ye, and *be baptized every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins*.” Acts ii. 38.

* “Quomodo igitur sciunt, utrum de congruo an de condigno mereantur? Sed tota hæc res conficta est *ab otiosis hominibus*, qui non norunt, quomodo contingat remissio peccatorum, et quomodo in iudicio Dei, et *terroribus conscientiæ*, fiducia operum nobis excutiat. Securi hypocritæ semper judicant, se de condigno mereri, . . . sed *conscientiæ perterrefactæ* ambigunt et dubitant, et subinde alia opera quærunt et cumulant ut acquiescant. Hæ nunquam sentiunt se de condigno mereri, et ruunt in desperationem, nisi audiant præter doctrinam legis, Evangelium de *gratuita remissione peccatorum*, et *justitia fidei*.”—MELANCTHON. *Apol. Conf.* 63.

“Non enim potest cor, vere sentiens Deum irasci, diligere Deum, *nisi ostendatur placatus*; donec terret et videtur nos abjicere in æternam mortem, non potest se erigere natura humana, *ut diligat iratum, judicantem, et punientem*. Facile est otiosis fingere ista somnia de dilectione, *quia non sentiunt quid sit ira, aut iudicium Dei*. At in agone conscientiæ, et in acie experitur conscientia vanitatem illarum speculationum philosophicarum.”—ID. *Ib.* 66.

And it is thus as a *sign* of this purification, or washing out of guilt in the sight of God, that Ananias, similarly, says to Saul, “And now, why tarriest thou?” lingering in the darkness, and the agony of your terror-struck conscience,*—“Arise, and *be baptized*, and *wash away thy sins*, calling on the name of the Lord.” Acts xxii. 16. Where observe, that the *declaration* of that pardon and acceptance of which the washing with water was to be the symbol, and thus should more effectually commend the blessed truth to the faith of Saul,—this had been already made by Ananias, (and that too, with another significant act) on his first accosting the amazed and anxious convert: for Ananias “when he had entered into the house, *putting his hands on him*” (in sign of peace and benediction) “said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and *be filled with the Holy Ghost*.” While in both these instances, it is “*the Lord*,” and “*the name of the Lord*” which are set forth as the *efficient cause* of the propitiation and the grace proclaimed; the symbolical act being only the *instrument* through which the mind of the penitent is brought into contact with that cause—the link by which the animating truth of God’s forgiveness through the blood of Christ, is more effectually conveyed into the soul. And hence it is that the symbolical act of baptism is, in the Nicene Creed, commemorated in such close connexion with that truth: “I believe in one baptism for the remission of sins.”†

* For “he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.”—Acts ix. 9.

† For the same reason—as being so effectual a *sign* of God’s grace and goodwill to us,—does Luther press so strongly on the Christian the habitual recollection of his baptismal standing, in Christ Jesus; that so the reconciliation symbolized to us, and the promises assured to us, by that significant rite, may be retained the more steadily in the grasp of faith. “Quapropter quivis

But we have now to show, in the third place, that *a practical sense of this new relation into which the penitent is admitted through the sacrifice of Christ, is the work of the Holy Ghost.*

For first, it is the Holy Ghost who produces *that illumination of the mind which perceives the glory of Christ.* Christian faith has relation to the Christian truth of the forgiveness of sins. But this forgiveness of sins is proposed to us only through the purification wrought for us by Christ. And therefore it is only as the glory of this great Mediator,—the dignity of his person,—the sufficiency of his merits,—the efficacy of his work,—the ever-living force of his intercession,—become perceived by us, that we can exercise this faith. Faith is not an impression;—a feeling, we know not what, which we think we ought to find—or create—within ourselves, we know not how. But faith has relation to an object without us. It is, in fact, the response of the heart towards such an object represented to the mind. And even as confidence in a parent must spring from our knowledge of that parent; and trust in a friend, from our appreciation of that friend; so faith, which is confidence, trust, in the Unseen, must have for its correlative, not only the knowledge of God as exist-

Christianus per omnem vitam suam abunde satis habet, ut Baptismum recte perdiscat, atque exerceat. Sat enim habet negotii, ut credat firmiter, quæcunque Baptismo promittuntur, et offeruntur; victoriam nempe mortis ac Diaboli, remissionem peccatorum, gratiam Dei, Christum cum omnibus suis operibus, et Spiritum Sanctum cum omnibus suis dotibus...Ita Baptismus intuendus est, et nobis fructuosus faciendus, ut hoc freti corrobororemur et confirmemur, quoties peccatis aut conscientia gravamur, ut dicamus; Ego tamen baptizatus sum; quod si baptizatus, certum est, ea promissa mihi data esse, me beatum fore, ac vitam immortalem et anima et corpore possessurum."—*Cat. maj.* 543.

So also Wycliff reminds us that "Baptizing is a *token* of the washing of the soul from sin, both original and actual, *by virtue taken of Christ's death.*" And Mr. Wilberforce says, (in *Christ. Obs.* Sep. 1839,) "The Sacrament of Baptism *shadows out* our souls being washed and purified *by the blood of Christ.*"

ing, but the knowledge of Him in *those specific aspects of a Father and a friend to us*. It is the manifestation of *character* which wakes up in us personal emotions corresponding to that character. And only in proportion as the character of God becomes unveiled to us in *its Christian aspect* can we exercise towards God a Christian faith. Whence Jesus so emphatically says, "This is life eternal, *to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*"

But the character of God in this its Christian aspect is made known to us only in the person, the work, the words, of Christ. It is *God in Christ* which is the proper object of Christian faith. It is Christ as the expression of the pardoning love of God. And yet, do all to whom such a theme has been proclaimed enter into it? Is the sublime Idea appreciated? Is it welcomed? Is it grasped and taken home to the heart? Is it not true in every age, as it was in the time of Paul, that the preaching of the Cross is to some foolishness, though to others it is the power of God? Whence then the very different light in which the same object is perceived by different minds? What makes it to some the savour of life, unto life, because they welcome it; to others the savour of death, unto death, because they neglect it? The word of God gives the answer. "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, which none of the princes of this world knew;—as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But *God hath revealed them unto us* BY HIS SPIRIT.—For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned; but *he that is spiritual judgeth all things.*" 1 Cor. ii. 7—15.

And may there then peradventure be a reader of this book who has not yet entered into the experience of the very truth

which you confess so repeatedly in your Creed,—“the forgiveness of sins?” Let me ask you, Whence comes this indifference? Why, having eyes see you not, and having ears hear you not; unless that you have failed to seek for the *illuminating* influences of THE SPIRIT OF GOD? We need the Holy Ghost, to work as much upon our *mind*, as on our *heart*: to give light, as well as life: yea to give light as the only means through which he may convey to us life! Do you bewail your timorousness of conscience;—your uneasiness of mind;—your inability to believe;—the impossibility that you should take so bold a step as to assure yourself that your sins are forgiven you? See if what you need be not the clear perception of *the Object* towards which such a faith must have relation; by gazing upon which it must be quickened, nourished, strengthened. And be assured that this Object will never shine forth to you in all his glory till the film of spiritual blindness have been purged away from your mind by the Holy Ghost. Pray then for his illumination. Beseech “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, to give to you *the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of CHRIST.*” (Eph. i. 17.) And then shall you experience that change of mind which to the trembling Saul was imaged out by bodily change;—There shall “fall from your eyes as it were scales; and you shall receive your sight, and be *filled with the Holy Ghost.*” Act ix. 17, 18.

But next; this same Spirit works *that reconciliation of the heart*, which *appropriates the work of Christ*. This is as needful as illumination to the mind. For “with *the heart* man *believeth* unto righteousness.” Rom. x. 10. The object before us must be embraced by the affections within us. And here is the point of distinction between an historical belief, and a spiritual faith. Herein lies the assimilating power which

makes a general proposition in God's word, the bread of life to my individual soul. There must be a *re-action of heart* towards God to appropriate the mercies of God. The voice that proclaimed "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins," said also "*Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee!*" Isa. xliv. 22. The Apostle who declares, "God was in Christ, *reconciling the world unto himself*, not imputing their trespasses unto them," adds immediately "Therefore, we pray you, in Christ's stead, *Be ye reconciled to God:*"—yea further, "We beseech you that ye *receive not that grace of God in vain!*" 2 Cor. v. 19. vi. 1. And this reconciliation of the heart to God; this bringing it back to him to lay hold of the mercy set before it this closing with his offers; and embracing his grace; is a work of the Holy Ghost. "*The Lord* opened the heart of Lydia, that she attended to the things which were spoken by Paul." Acts xvi. 14. "Ye have purified your souls," says Peter, "*in obeying the truth* THROUGH THE SPIRIT." 1 Peter i. 22. "We having" says St. Paul, "the same *spirit of faith*, according as it is written, I believed and therefore have I spoken; we also *believe* and therefore speak." 2 Cor. iv. 13.

But once more. It is the work of the Spirit, again, to produce in us a practical sense of relief from condemnation, because He effects that *surrender of the will* which *realizes our union with Christ*. The standing complete before God is the standing *in Christ*, as dwelling in him and he in us; as one with him and he with us. And hence the very title of a Christian is One who is "*in Christ Jesus;*" Rom. viii. 1, and one "*in whom Christ is.*" 2 Cor. xii. 5. But, to be "*in Christ*" and "*Christ in us*" is to have *surrendered up our own will, and taken into us his will*. It is to have put away our *earthly personality*,—that of the old man, which is corrupt

according to the deceitful lusts; and to have received a *heavenly personality*,—that of the new man, which is created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works. Whence the Apostle says, “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet *not I*; but *Christ liveth in me*: and the life which I now live in the flesh, *I live by the faith of the Son of God*, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Gal. ii. 20. Where mark, that “to live by faith” is to have “Christ living in us;” and to have “Christ living in us” is to have been “crucified with Christ” from our own will and personality, and to have risen again, endued, as it were, with *His* will and personality. But thus to have “Christ in us” is the work of *the Spirit of Christ*. It is by that Spirit that this union is first effected, and continually kept up. “If any man have not *the Spirit of Christ*,” says Paul, “he is none of his: but if *Christ be in you*” (mark the equivalency of the phrases) “then the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.” Rom. viii. 9, 10. “I will pray the Father,” said our blessed Lord, “and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even *the Spirit of truth*;—I will not leave you comfortless, *I will come unto you*.” John xiv. 16—18. O for the full indwelling of this Spirit of God, that we may thereby realize a vital union with the Son of God, and find him witnessing with our spirit that we are the children of God!

CHAPTER VIII.

CHRISTIAN HOPE.

THERE must be something very different in Christian Hope, from that which usually bears the name. Nothing so common and so easy as Hope. You hear persons professing it as a matter of course, both as regards themselves and their fellow-men. And yet, at the same time, this Hope is as lifeless as it is common. There is little — there is often nothing — positive in it. It is but the negation of fear.

But how different the character of Christian hope! You cannot look into the Bible without remarking, first, how *difficult* a disposition it seems to be considered. Even where the other Christian graces are in vigour, this is often wanting. Even when the Apostle rejoices in the Love, and the Faith, of his converts, he is obliged to use exhortation and prayer, as regards their hope. “I also” he writes to the Ephesians, “after I heard of your *faith* in the Lord Jesus Christ, and *love* to all the saints, make mention of you in my *prayers* that . . . ye may know what is the *hope* of his calling.” Eph. i. 15—18. And though, to the Romans, he avows, with perfect satisfaction, that he is persuaded they are full of *goodness*, and “filled with all *knowledge* ;” yet he makes it a subject of earnest supplication for them “that the God of Hope may fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in *Hope* through the power of the Holy Ghost.” Rom. xv. 14, 13. In which passage, moreover, you must be struck

with a second characteristic of this grace,—how *lively* it is; how productive of joy and peace; how essentially different from that dull immunity from fear, which is to the sparkling spirit of the Gospel as the stagnant pool to the ebullient spring. “Whosoever drinketh of this water” said Jesus to the woman of Samaria, “shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him *a well of water springing up to everlasting life!*” John iv. 13, 14.

And of this everlasting life, we are now to speak. Our meditations on the Creed have brought us up to that last point;—that consummation of all human interests, physical, moral, spiritual;—that end for which as creatures we were made;—that prize for which as Christians we run;—“THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING.” O for God’s grace to treat this subject aright! O for his Spirit to beget us thereby to “a lively Hope!”

For, in treating these final clauses of our Creed we must remember that they set before us those objects by which the Holy Ghost quickens and sustains the HOPE of the Christian as regards *the world before him*. And this world before us may be looked upon—must be so—in three aspects. First, as we are interested in it *for ourselves, as individual members of Christ*. Secondly, as we are interested in it *for ourselves, as parts of a general system of things*. And thirdly, as we are interested in it *for that general system itself, of which we are parts*. The Christian is united to *his Lord*;—it is essential to his hope that he be assured this union shall continue onward, after death. He is united to *the world around him* which that Lord came to redeem;—it is essential to his hope that he be assured this union shall be restored after the separation caused by death. He is united to *the interests of that*

world, its history and future fate, upon that Lord's return;—it is essential to his hope that he be assured of his participation in the final triumph of that world redeemed, through all the new relations of the everlasting age.

Here then we have opened to us three of the most important topics which relate to the world before us;—the permanency of our being;—the restoration of our body;—and our participation in the final triumph of all creation in the everlasting age.

The topic of this chapter is THE PERMANENCY OF OUR BEING. And my endeavour will be to show you how *probable* the Hope of this is made, by Reason—how *certain*, by the word of God.

SECTION I.

THE PERMANENCY OF THE SOUL PROBABLE.

I do not purpose to enter here into all the manifold considerations which show that the Hope of our continued being after death is rendered probable by Reason. And yet I would not altogether pass them by, as utterly unworthy of the Christian's attention. For we gain a great deal, upon subjects like the present, if we can show that the conjectures of Reason, however far they may fall short of proof, are yet *in the direction of* the disclosures of Revelation;—that the full-formed truth of Scripture has been prefigured by the imperfect shapings of the human mind;—that the infant utterance of untutored nature has lisped forth some few syllables of the clear and full enunciation of the voice of God.

For, if you consult THE ANTICIPATIONS OF OUR HUMAN INSTINCT, you will see that a permanency of being is con-

tinually *assumed*, in all its forms of utterance. Men cannot conceive the contrary. To think and talk of ourselves, or of others, as in some way, and in some sense, enduring ; is easy, natural, universal. Whereas to assert the contrary requires effort ; seems to be doing violence to our most inborn feelings. The idea of life is so familiar to us, so twisted in with all our most closely woven associations, that we cannot, without the greatest labour, separate it off from them. Death never seems to us destruction. A something, be it light as air and dim as the images of dreams,—still a something, the very lowest grade of men (such as the aborigines of New Holland) assume to be remaining (and remaining *alive*) of him who has once breathed and moved before their eyes. All peoples, I say, in all stages of developement, have believed this. And it is the dictum of one of the wisest of uninspired thinkers, that what all men, in all ages, have believed ;—that the consent of nations—of universal humanity ;—must be considered as a law of nature.* Nor is it here to be objected that such expectation, like many fancies of a popular belief, may possibly deceive us ; for the answer is, that whatever errors in matters of scientific knowledge, or of the sensuous imagination, may have met with universal, or almost universal, credence ; because the sole materials on which the understanding and the fancy work are the deceptive notices of sense ; this cannot invalidate the *moral convictions* of the *practical reason* of mankind, which are the offspring of the *generic Ideas* of the human soul.† Our belief in the permanency of our being is,

* *Omni in re consensio omnium gentium lex naturæ putanda est. CICERO : Quæst. Tuscul. i. 13. So also SENECA, Ep. 117. Cum de animarum æternitate disserimus, non leve momentum apud nos habet consensus hominum, aut timentium inferos, aut colentium.*

† *Atque hoc ita sentimus natura duce, nulla ratione nullaque doctrina. Maximum vero argumentum est naturam ipsam de immortalitate animorum tacitam judicare, quod omnibus curæ sunt, et maximæ quidem, quæ post mortem futura sint.—CICERO. Ibid. 14.*

in this respect, akin to our belief in spirit—our belief in virtue—our belief in God !

But go on, next, to THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE INTELLECT on this matter. For these have not been wanting ; in various ways. Men soon began to speculate on a subject which so much concerned them. The yearnings of human instinct demanded and received the investigations of human intellect. And when men looked into their nature, and examined that within them which is the seat of thought and feeling and will—which manifestly constitutes their essential and peculiar *being*—they seemed to find weighty reasons for the assent of their *judgment* to the intimations of their *nature*.

For, when you look to *the unity of your inward being* ; how, with members of the body manifold, and exercises of the mind innumerable, and alterations of the one and of the other continually going on ; you still are conscious amidst all this unceasing change, of something *stable* ;—this endless variety, of something *always the same* ;—this multiplicity of parts and thoughts and feelings and volitions, of something *single*, as the one sole cause of all ; there comes with this the strong conviction that what is not compounded cannot be dissolved ;—that what remains the same amidst the fluctuations of seventy and eighty years must surely continue to remain the same through longer tracts of time ;—that what has suffered the subtraction of every particle of the body in which it dwells, at least ten different times within a life of seventy years, and yet survives that loss uninjured, may just as well survive the last removal of that body in a mass, and keep on whole and vigorous still. You know that even in matter, amidst the infinite changes of its forms, from the beginning of the world, not one substantial particle ever

perishes; * and you find it, therefore, impossible to imagine, against all analogy, that it is otherwise with mind.†

And when, moreover, you consider, next, *the potentiality of your inward being*; — its progressive tendency; — its being formed for attainments which in this life never are realized; — its capacity for an expansion, which in these few years of being never takes place; — when you consider that, as the youngest infant to the full-grown man, so is the actual stature which we attain to in this world to the *standard height of soul* for which we seem to have been formed; — can you for a moment believe that He who formed you after such a standard, and *implanted the idea of such a standard* in your mind, and thus has led you to look forward to your ultimate attainment of it, — that He, the wise and good, will cut down, in the very first stage of its growth, his own fair plant? That is a touching emblem of mortality which the ancients were fond of, — a truncated column — a pillar broken off near its base. But yet that very emblem carries in itself an argument for immortality. For if that column have been the work of an intelligent architect, it must have been begun according to a finished design; which finished design, if but that architect be

*

Rerumque novatrix

Ex aliis alias reparat Natura figuras.

Nec perit in toto quidquam, mihi credite, mundo;

Sed variat, faciemque novat; nascique vocatur

Incipere esse aliud, quam quod fuit ante; morique

Desinere illud idem. Cum sint huc forsitan illa,

Hæc translata illuc; *summâ tamen omnia constant.*OVID. *Met.* xv. 252—258.

†

Regit *idem spiritus* artus

Orbe alio; longæ, canitis si cognita, vitæ

Mors media est.

LUCAN, i. 456.

powerful as he is wise, who can believe shall be cut short and frustrated in execution? He who laid down its base, shall he not rear it even to the splendid capital? The interruption of the work which appears to us, can it be more than *mere appearance*? What has begun to rise above the low mean level of our imperfect vision, shall we, because we cannot follow it in its upward growth, deny that it continues to rise?—And yet indeed what *is* man but a truncated column,—the shame of his Designer,—the reproach of the Architect who has begun to build and cannot finish—if there be not another state, in which he shall be reared up to his god-like height?

But, does God in anything else, sketch out a noble design, and then come short of its execution? Does he bring together vast materials, and leave them only an unfinished mass? Does he wrap up the rudiments of the oak in the acorn, and yet *never* suffer that acorn to unfold itself into a tree? Does he make room, in the very form of the chrysalis, for the ultimate protrusion of the future insect, and yet forbid that insect to protrude? Does he give, throughout all nature, in each of her stages, anticipations, yea and prophecies, of the higher stage yet to be developed; and yet does he suffer those anticipations, those mute prophecies, to fail? And what then, if he has wrapped up in *man* the rudiments of a something, which never in this life has gained room to expand itself? What, if he has filled the soul of man, in its very constitution and capacities, with prophecies irrepressible of a stage not yet developed; a life not yet reached; to which this present stage is no more than the rudimental indistinctness of the unborn infant in its embryo existence? Is not all this ground for solid argument? Does it not amount to *moral proof* that our present condition is but the bud of our being? The infancy of our nature? The faint commencement of a life which, according to its manifest rudiments, *must* grow up and

strengthen and complete itself through ages yet to come? How clearly this conviction was spoken out, how beautifully symbolized, by that other ancient emblem, so common upon tombs, the figure of a butterfly. In that one little image there was comprehended all the vast argument drawn from the analogy of nature round us—from the undeveloped character of our present being—from the potentiality of *life* in all its forms. Men told themselves, the soul too had a transmigration to undergo!—the soul too would put forth her wings; and soar into the expanse of a purer sky; and drink in the breath of heaven; and glitter in the sunlight of a brighter world!

And this the judgment seems yet more convinced of when it looks, further, at *the contradictions of our inward being* in its present state. There is a *unity* in it, distinct from that of the body;—there is a *potentiality* in it, pressing out far beyond its present sphere;—and, as the necessary consequence of these qualities, there is a *contrariety in its workings*, to those of its earthly tenement and of the narrow sphere of its present existence; *which contrariety, of itself*, declares to us that this is not its final resting place; it is cut out for something larger than its present relations; it *must* look to another state of things for harmony, equilibrium, repose. Vast in purpose, yet cribbed, cabined, and confined, in operation; pure and holy in its intellectual aspirations, yet defiled by its corporeal associations; in nature spiritual, yet in passion and in action sensuous; the admirer of what is heavenly, the lover of what is earthly; enduring a continual struggle of jarring impulses; distracted by a mysterious antagonism between the judgments of the mind and the elections of the will; and drawn out, above all, by its earthly senses, affections and appetites to the pursuit of objects which, in the very midst of that pursuit, are

felt by it to be utterly incommensurable to its nature, entirely incapable of satisfying its vast desires — “its very wishes giving not its wish;” how can we force upon ourselves the belief that this mysterious being has *a common nature* and a *common duration* and a *common end*, with the perishable things around us? how can we think that *That in us* which alone stamps the idea of permanence on any of the fleeting apparitions which sweep past the outward sense, can be itself *not a whit more permanent* than those apparitions? — is hurrying away with them into the gloomy night of nothingness? Do you not feel that you are in all respects, different *in kind*, both from the body in which you dwell; and from the natural phenomena of this material world which through the instrumentality of that body are presented to your view? And does not just this very difference *in kind*, in all other respects, assure you of a *similar difference* with reference to your *permanency*; and convince you that while they but come like shadows, and so depart, you shall assuredly *endure*?

But what, if you add on to the consideration of these Instincts of our nature, and Conclusions of our intellect, THE DEMANDS OF OUR MORAL SENSE:—a sense which is a part of our nature as much as all our other senses, powers, and faculties;—a sense, therefore, which must have, corresponding to it, *correlative objects*, either present or future, to satisfy the end for which it is implanted in us. If you look on the eye, you conclude from its construction that it is made to see; and you argue from this manifest purpose that God has provided a world of *objects* of sight. If you examine the ear, you find it made susceptible of sound; and you judge that it is meant for an atmosphere through which sounds may be conveyed to it. And in both cases you are right. In all the cases, of all your bodily senses, where there is a provision in yourself

for *being affected* there is equally a provision in the world without of *objects to affect you*. And shall this reciprocation stop here? Shall it find its full play as regards the lower senses, and be checked and thwarted in the higher sense? Shall it hold good in affections of body, and fail only in affections of mind?

And have you then an *inward sense* as well as outward ones? Have you a *moral feeling* as well as physical ones? Are you made capable of being affected, yea by the constitution of your nature unable to be otherwise than affected, by sentiments of benevolence,—of right—of equity—of perfectness,—of moral harmony;—and shall those sentiments always find themselves at variance with the world and with each other? that moral feeling be always lacerated? that inward sense always fail of objects adequate to respond to, and to satisfy it; even as the harmonies of form and colour satisfy the eye,—the dulcet strains of music soothe the ear? But yet, you know too well, that in this present state of being such failure does take place;—such satisfaction is not reached. The more our moral sentiments are cultivated, the more are they torn and wounded. The finer our spiritual sensibilities, the more tremblingly alive do they become to the jar and discord of a dissonant world. The more we compare the history of individuals, and the history of the earth, with the *IDEAS of what things ought to be*, as those ideas present themselves unbidden, yea irrepressibly, to the moral judgment, the more do we feel the vast discrepancy of the objects presented to us, with the moral sense implanted in us: all things *not* in unison with our ideas of complete benevolence—of rigid right—of nicest equity—of entire perfection,—of moral harmony; but on the contrary pain; misfortune; inequality; the oppression of the good; the triumph of the wicked; a world in disorder; a race of moral beings dwarfed, maimed, curtailed of

their proportions, mutilated. And does not this assure to you, with a *moral evidence* as powerful as the moral sense within you, that there *must be another state*, to make up the deficiencies of this? to rectify the aberrations of this? to fill up the inequalities of this? to restore the equilibrium which has been destroyed in this? I say that such a belief is *necessary* to the moralist, to save him from the dark misgivings which the contradictions in himself and in the world must otherwise produce;—for only in the future can he seek the counterweights which shall reset the balance of his convictions, and harmonize a belief in virtue with a belief in God!

And this, then, leads us to a fourth and final argument for our continuance in being, which springs from THE CONVICTIONS OF OUR RELIGIOUS BELIEF. We ourselves, we cannot but feel, are creatures of GOD. The world of which we are part is the creation of GOD. And all things tell us that this GOD is no mere universal breath, or primary power, but a personal Being, intellective, full of purpose and energy, holy, just, and good. These convictions rise within us on their own base; built up on their proper arguments; as we have formerly seen. But these convictions *contain within them the assurance of a life to come*. They cannot be sustained in us if we deny a life to come. We cannot stop with them. We must go on from them, to further conclusions; or we must go back from them. For if there is a GOD; and that God is an intelligent, wise, benevolent, and powerful Being; the Creator of this world; then this his world must be the object of his care—his superintendence—his sovereign rule. It has not been launched forth into space, and there left to the sport of the conflicting elements. It is not sustained by God's life-giving energy, and yet unregulated by his presiding mind. There is a *moral Governor* of all things as well as a First Cause. And that

moral Governor, being wise as he is good, and powerful as he is wise, must certainly be disposing all things in the world he governs, by definite methods, towards a definite end. But, what that end *is* we cannot but judge of *according to the moral principles* which God himself has given us. As he has made us in the image of himself, our idea of Him, our expectations from him, cannot but be formed according to the dictates of that moral nature in which our likeness to him consists. That is, we *must* anticipate,—we cannot but assure ourselves—that this moral Governor of the universe intends to bring about such a final harmony as (we have seen already) our moral sense, which is the transcript and the index of the mind and purpose of God, demands. Therefore, as surely as we believe there is a God, so surely are we obliged to believe a further state of perfectness;—and a living on, for ourselves and others, beyond the boundaries of the time now present, into that state of perfectness; in order that *the purpose of God* to both ourselves and others, which *here is not accomplished*, may there be fully realized:—which here seems even frustrated, may there become triumphant;—which here is only in the bud, may there expand into maturity. As surely (I must repeat) as there is a God; as surely as He is the moral Governor of his creation; so surely is there for us a permanency of being beyond the grave. We know it. We feel it. “Even when we cannot *prove it well*” (to use the words of Bishop Taylor) “we can *believe it strongly*; and we are sure of the thing even when we are not sure of the argument.” We have “*hope toward God* that there shall be a resurrection of the dead.” Acts xxiv. 15.

And now then, even on the probabilities of Reason, pause for a moment, to consider *what a glorious truth is here!* Take it, not as a speculative, but a *practical* conviction. Look at

it from the proper point of view—that of *application to yourself and to your friends*. Place yourself in imagination on the very verge of the present world,—with life fast ebbing away from you:—or place yourself (which you may probably do by recollection) at the death-bed of your nearest and your dearest, with their last sigh breathing itself forth upon your cheek;—and say, What is the worth of this truth of a permanent existence beyond the grave! The *worth* of it! And could you live a moment without it? The *worth* of it! When, if you take it away, this present being with all its busy interests, and deep emotions, and infinite imaginings, must seem to you no better than the unreal mockery of a fairy vision!—when you yourself, and all you love, must be indeed

“ Such stuff

As dreams are made of: and your little life

Be rounded with a sleep!” *

And O then let us bless God for *the certainties of Revelation* which, on this point, as Christians we enjoy. For your mind I doubt not has already anticipated those certainties. You have said to yourself, as we have traced the outline of our argument, What need of all these *probabilities* on a matter which no one now can doubt? Why attempt to show from Reason what Revelation has for ever settled?—But let me ask you, in return, *WHY are those probabilities needless to you?*

* How similar the description by Æschylus of untaught, merely animal man!—

Οἱ πρῶτα μὲν, ἐλέποντες ἔλεπον μάτην,
κλύοντες οὐκ ἤκουον· ἀλλ' ὀνειράτων
ἀλίγκιοι μορφαῖσι, τὸν μακρὸν χρόνον
ἔφουρον εἰκῇ πάντα *

PROMETH. 456—

“ Who, at the first, though seeing, saw not; hearing, did not hear; but like the unreal shapes of dreams, through all their weary time, mixed up in wild confusion all things.”

Why does the subject seem so *certain*, but because you have been brought up in a Christian country, under the teaching of a Christian church? The subject was not certain to men of old. Those probabilities were all they had; and while they scarcely dared to think them more than probabilities, they clung to them as their only hope, content to be (if so it were) mistaken, rather than be desolate.* Yet you can now securely live upon, as your sure possession, a truth which they searched for as for silver, and digged for as for hid treasure! O what a triumph for Christianity that (not only upon this but other equally important subjects) it has turned mere speculations of philosophy into verities of faith! That truths, which the wisest and the best of heathen minds could only reach by a laborious ascent, the church of Christ has brought down from their almost inaccessible heights to lay as the foundation stones of popular belief! The ultimate conclusions of the schools, she now embodies in the elementary propositions of a Catechism! Problems once insoluble even by the sage, she is commissioned to set forth as axioms, to be relied on by the child! Consider, I pray you, the amount of such a blessing ministered to you by a Christian church—a Christian education—a Christian habit of thinking imperceptibly acquired amidst the certainties of Revelation;—till you prize and cherish it as it deserves. Let no one think it a mark of wisdom to *begin to doubt* of all acknowledged truths. Nurtured in an age of men, labour not to reduce yourself to childhood. Born in the light, plunge not back into a darkness which is past. Placed on the sure foundation of Christian

* “But if indeed” says Cicero, “I err, in thinking that man’s being is permanent, *I choose to err*: nor will I ever suffer any one to wrest from me an error which affords me such repose!” Quod si in hoc erro, quod animos hominum immortales esse credam, lubenter erro: nec mihi hunc errorem, quo delector, dum vivo, extorqueri volo.—*De Senectute*, 23.

faith, attempt not to dig up the solid masonry ; but on that sure foundation rear the noble edifice of Christian *holiness*,—itself the labour of a life. For “ blessed are your eyes if they see ; and your ears if they hear ! For verily I say unto you that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them ; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them ! ”

SECTION II.

THE PERMANENCY OF THE SOUL, CERTAIN.

WE have seen the probabilities of Reason, on the important subject of the permanency of our being. We have now to pass on to THE CERTAINTIES OF REVELATION.

In turning to which certainties we must remind ourselves of the original proposition, of which we are seeking the proof: this namely, that the Christian may repose his Hope on the assurance that *his Union with his Lord shall be continued onward*, even through the gates of death, into the everlasting world. It is of *Christian Hope* that we are treating: and it is concerning the condition of *the member of Christ*, in that new sphere of things which opens out beyond the grave, that we are to collect the declarations of the word of God.

Now the sum of such declarations, so far as they bear upon our Christian Hope, amounts to this: First, That death produces no interruption of what we at present enjoy: and Secondly, That it affords the introduction to what we at present are wanting in.

First, the word of God reveals to us, that DEATH PRODUCES NO INTERRUPTION OF WHAT WE AT PRESENT ENJOY.

Look, first, at the *Life* which you now enjoy. The life, I mean, not of the body but of the mind;—your thinking, feeling, willing, life. This, your very consciousness assures you, is distinct from that of the body in which you dwell. And this, therefore, we have reason to suppose, even from the arguments of the preceding section, cannot be affected by the

dissolution of that of which it forms no part. But we have to do now, not with suppositions but *assertions*;—not with the reasonings of man, but with the *declarations of God*. Our blessed Lord came forth from the world of spirits into the world of sense. In this world of sense he proved himself, by incontrovertible evidence, the Son of God. And He, this Son of God, who speaks the words of God,—what does HE say upon this point of the duration of that being which I call my Self? The passage from which I seek the answer to this question is as remarkable for its *context*, as for its *independent force*. It is that of John xi. 25, 26. “He that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” Now in what connexion were these words uttered by our blessed Lord? Lazarus was dead. Mary was sitting in silent sorrow. Martha, with her more active temperament, had run to Jesus, and said, almost reproachfully, “If thou hadst been here my brother had not died!” Nor had she failed to subjoin her expectation, and her wish, of some *immediate consolation*, (she knew not perhaps precisely what,) from her gracious Lord. “But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.” And to this the reply of Jesus is, “Thy brother shall rise again.” But in such an assurance there was nothing new to Martha. A future resurrection was the established doctrine of the Jews. Nay, in such an assurance there was nothing which met her *present grief*, and the yearnings of her soul with reference to her brother’s present state. And she answers therefore, “*I know* that he shall rise again, in the resurrection at the last day!” “It is part of our national creed that when Messiah shall come, all his people shall be recovered from hades to meet him!” Now mark the answer of Jesus to this: an answer evidently given, to explain to her *the sense in which he adopted* that ordinary term

“ the Resurrection ; ”—the sense in which he had just declared to her, Thy brother shall rise again ;—and therefore the sense in which we must understand him, when he uses these terms in other places ; in the sixth chapter, for example, of this same Gospel by St. John. Mark, I say, this answer ; by which he intimates that he meant not, in what he had said, to direct the hopes of Martha, to that *final resurrection* at the end of the world, to which, in common with her countrymen she was already looking forward ; but to *meet the particular case of her present distress, and her present desires* :—an answer by which he shows that the true, Christian, view of “ rising again ” is not merely a *future return* to life, but a *present continuance in life* ; not a distant hope, but an immediate possession ; not a going down to death and a subsequent *rescue* from his gloomy cavern, but an *exemption from death*, and a *present preservation from his benumbing touch*, so far as regards the SELF—the Soul. For, “ Jesus said unto her, *I am the resurrection, and the life* ; ” that which you look for as *future*—behold the Author of it, yea the Source of all Life, present as well as future, now before your eyes !—“ And he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live : yea whosoever liveth and believeth in me SHALL NEVER DIE.”* The believer in Jesus partakes of the *life* of Jesus ; and that *life* of Jesus endures no interruption, meets with no check, is exposed to no even momentary, diminution ; and therefore, he who partakes that life, though seemingly dead, and as to his body really dead ; yet *dies never* as to his soul. If there were nothing more asserted, in these remarkable words, than a *future resurrection*, what had Jesus said beyond what Martha already knew, yea had already reminded him that she knew ? What

* As if he had said, “ You complain, ‘ If thou hadst been here my brother had not died.’ But he is *not dead*, as regards his soul ! The believer never, in this sense, dies ! ”

was there to require his solemn assurance “I AM the resurrection, and the life”—look to ME for what you long for, and not to some final restoration? What was there to call for his searching question, by which he tested her faith in HIMSELF specifically, and independently of that doctrine which she had already professed—“Believest thou this?” And what was there to draw forth her earnest declaration of satisfied affiance in (over and above that doctrine) the *personal dignity and power of Jesus himself*: “Lord I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!” Does he not plainly teach by all this that, to his people, besides that *future resurrection*, there is secured the permanency of this *present life*, which they now enjoy? He that believeth in Jesus, though he be dead, yet still he lives!

But, as death is no interruption of our present Life, so neither is it of our present *consciousness*. The state of the disembodied spirit is not a *slumbering* but a *waking* one. The image of sleep, which is so common in Scripture, is used, not of the *soul*, which lives; but only of the *body*, which has died. And as “to be alive” in the present state, as spoken of our mind, is to possess the vigour, and exercise the energies, of its several powers;—the deliberating judgment, the intelligent purpose, the conscious feeling, the determining will; so “to be alive” in the next state, is to be not simply *existing*, but existing *in vigour*;—yea in the vigour of *self-conscious energizing*. This is the force of our Lord’s reasoning with the Sadducees, Luke xx. 27—38; in which you will observe again, (what has been already noticed,) that Jesus, when contending for “the resurrection of the dead,” argues for *that sense* of the phrase which declares, not a *future restoration*, but a *present existence*. For he brings forward, in proof of this great fact “that *the dead are raised*,” a declaration

which shows,—not that they *shall be*, at some future time, transferred from the slumber of the grave into renewed consciousness; but that they *are*, now, existing, beyond the grave, in such consciousness. For what is his proof “that the dead are raised?” Just the recognition, in the book of God, of the *present existence*, yea, the active, conscious existence of the buried patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.* For he says, “Now that the dead are raised,” (which must, from the context, mean, “are transferred from this lower to a *higher* life,”) “even Moses shewed at the bush;” (*i. e.* at that part of the book of Exodus which speaks of God’s appearing to him in the bush; Exod. iii. 2; long, therefore, after the patriarchs were dead and buried) “when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is *not a God of the dead but of the living* :” he cannot, *i. e.* speak of himself as the Friend—the Protector—the Promise-keeper—to those who are *not in existence* to be the objects of his favour; nay, nor unless they are in *conscious* existence to enjoy that favour: “for” (he adds) “*all live to him* ;” all those patriarchs,† though dead to the world are living still in the sight, and in the service, of Him.‡

* Macknight, of all the commentators, seems to me to have stated the argument of our Lord here the most simply and correctly: “His argument was this: As a man cannot be a father without children, nor a king without subjects, so God cannot properly be called God, unless he has his people, and be Lord of the living. Since therefore, in the law, he calls himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, long after these patriarchs were dead, the relation denoted by the word *God* still subsisted between them; for which reason... they were still in being, God’s subjects and covenanted people.” § 118.

† “Omnes:” illi nimirum, Abrahamus, Is. Jac.—GROTIUS.

‡ Coram Domino.—LUC. BRUGENSIS. “Subject to his government.”—MACKNIGHT. “The godly do not die though they die here on earth.”—BEZA.

“Why then their loss deplore, that are not lost?—

They live! they greatly live a life, on earth

Unkindled, unconceived!”—YOUNG.

Just as in Josephus, the mother encourages her sons rather to die than transgress the law of God, “being assured of this that those who have given up life for the sake of God, *STILL LIVE TO GOD, as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the patriarchs do.*”* Just as Philo, again, introduces the Lord himself as saying, “But no one ever dies as regards his relation to me, the Judge of men; yea rather *he lives throughout all time, without growing old, and with the deathless energy of a soul no longer clogged by the necessities of the body.*”†

With all which doctrine, I need not tell you, agrees the promise of Jesus to the dying thief, “To day shalt thou be *with me in Paradise.*” Luke xxiii. 43. And the declaration of Paul concerning his dismissal from the flesh, “having a desire to depart and to *be with Christ*; which is far better.” Phil. i. 23. Nay and his certain confidence of the nature of the change which awaited him, “We are willing rather to be absent from the body and *present with the Lord*, and therefore we labour that whether *present* or absent we may be accepted of him.” 2 Cor. v. 8, 9. With which accords his *general* assurance with respect to all Christians, “Christ died for us that whether we wake *or sleep*, we should *live together with him.*” 1 Thess. v. 10. All these passages declaring not simply a continued *existence* of the soul, whether the body be awake or asleep; but this existence accompanied with a *consciousness of the relation* in which we stand to Christ, and Christ to us;—with the sense of his presence;—with the enjoyment of communion with him;—in a word, with all that

* Joseph: de Maccab. c. 16. *καὶ ταυτα ειδοτες, ὅτι οἱ δια τον Θεον απο-
θνησκοντες ζῶσι τῷ Θεῷ, ὡσπερ Αβρααμ, Ισαακ, καὶ Ιακωβ, καὶ παντες οἱ
πατριαρχαι.*

† Philo de Joseph: ii. 78. *τεθνηκε δ' ουδεις παρ' εμοι, κριτη των ανδρων,
αλλα καὶ ζησεται τον αι χρονον αγηρως, αθανατω φυσει ψυχης μηκετι ταις
σωματος αναγκαις ενδεδυμενη.*

the Christian now experiences of the *conscious exercise* of love, and faith, and hope; of dependence on God's protection, sense of his favour, looking for promises to be fulfilled, and waiting for manifestations to be made—all this, in all its life, *continued on with him* into another state.

Nor is this all. There is a third particular of our present enjoyment, to which no interruption is caused by death. Not only the vigour of *life*—not only the energy of *consciousness*, and that towards God and Christ, go on without pause or check; but also the glow of *sympathy with the family of God*.

And first, with that portion of it which is *in heaven*. When St. Paul declares to the Hebrews that they are brought by faith into union with the family of God, of whom does he represent that family to consist?—all spoken of in the same terms—all as existing in close connexion and communion. “Ye are come” he says, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly” (the festive meeting of social joy and triumph*) “and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all,† and to *the spirits of just men made perfect*, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.” Heb. xii. 22—24. Where the point I wish to press is the *perfect identity* of terms, in which the Apostle speaks of all

* For *πανήγυρις* denotes the solemn festive meeting of a whole people for public fellowship and rejoicing; such as the Grecian states had, some yearly, some every fourth year; such as the *re-unions* among the Jews in which they came together from all parts of the world to the feast of the Lord in their holy city, and which Josephus calls *πανήγυρις πανδήμοι*. See Dindorf in *Ernesti*. How exhilarating an image! How glorious the feeling of such a gathering of all the people of God that on this earth are scattered abroad! You see them in the Apocalypse, with their white robes of triumph—you hear their chant of festive adoration! Rev. v. 8—10. vii. 9—12.

† How striking that epithet! “The Judge of all;”—the presiding Ruler (*Βραβευτής*) of the Festival, who distributes the prizes which diffuse hilarity and exultation over that joyous meeting. See CARPZOV. And comp. 1 Pet. iv.

the individuals composing this glorious band ; so that, what is true of one or more of the group must be admitted as true of *all*. For is the ascended Jesus *alive*, and *conscious*, and *sympathizing*, with his Father, and the holy angels? Are those angels themselves alive, and conscious, and sympathizing with all the works and ways of God? alert as winds, and vigorous as flame? And are not the "*spirits of just men*" who have finished their course, and reached the goal of their high calling,—are not *these also* included in this same festival enjoyment of *life*, and *consciousness* and *energy* and *sympathy*? We know they are from another passage, even more direct than this: from the express revelation vouchsafed to the Apostle John, the actual *vision* of those who had gone before him; and who, to use the words of St. Peter, though put to death in the flesh were alive in the spirit; "for, for this cause," (he says,) "was the gospel preached to them who now are dead, that though judged according to men in the flesh," *i. e.* though condemned, and martyred by men as regards their corporeal tabernacle, "they yet might *live* according to God *in the spirit*," might continue to live in the sight of their heavenly Father, as regards their soul, their self. 1 Pet. iv. 6.* For what says

5, 6. *q. d.* Now you meet with nothing but injustice, but "God is at hand to *judge* the quick and the dead," and in *his sight*, though dead, to the world, and trampled on, the saints do live and triumph! Philo uses the same epithet, with the same implied reference, in the passage quoted above, p. 401. "No one ever dies as regards his relation to me, the *Judge*," the presiding and retributive Ruler, "of men."

* "Them that are dead;" that have been taken from you by premature death and martyrdom. Comp. Ruth. i. 8. "The Lord deal kindly with you as you have dealt with *the dead*" (my sons who have been taken from me) "and me." These martyrs have suffered indeed all that men could do against them, (*κατὰ ἀνθρώπους*, quod in hominibus est: cf. Matt. x. 28)—their bodies have been killed by them;—but they do not lose their part and interest in the glad tidings which were proclaimed to them, equally as to you—(cf. 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14,) they live by God's power (*κατὰ Θεόν* quod in Deo est; Dei virtute) in the spirit, and he will award to them, along with you, his final glory! If

the Apostle John concerning such? "I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;" (the emblems of victory and triumph) "and cried with a loud voice, saying Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four living creatures, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God." Rev. vii. 9—11. And here again the point which I press is simply this, that whatever is true, and to what extent soever it is true, with reference to any one portion of this triumphant band is equally true of the other portions. If the angels live, so do "the great multitude;" if the angels rejoice before God, so do the redeemed: there is *one company of men and angels*, before the mind's eye of the inspired Apostle, engaged in the same work; animated by the same spirit; singing the same song; swelling the same chorus of adoration to their common Father and their common Lord. O there is no want of sympathy—no lack of communion—no dreary solitariness—no dreamy suspension of interest—for the spirits of the just; but all do LIVE, to their brethren as well as to their God!

Nor, then, is there any interruption of their sympathy, even with the church *on earth*. "I saw" says the same Apostle,

they live not now,—if they shall not be "judged" and vindicated hereafter,—of what use to them the glad tidings which were preached to them before their death? Then is their hope perished with them! "Intelligendi νεκροί, non qui mortui erant cùm eis annuntiaretur Christus, sed qui mortui erant cùm Petrus hæc scriberet. Christus voluit Evangelium annuntiari etiam iis qui jam sunt mortui. Ergo, non vivos tantum sed et mortuos, judicabit. Alioqui frustrà illis annunciatu esset, frustrà illi credidissent, et dura per tulissent."—GROTIUS.

“under the altar,* the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them;” (as signs and pledges of final victory) “and it was said unto them, that they should *rest yet for a little season*, until *their fellow servants* also and *their brethren*, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.” Rev. vi. 9—11. Where you see depicted an interest in God’s people on earth—a zeal for God’s honour—a longing for the manifestation of God’s righteous retribution—a sympathy with those of their brethren yet in the flesh, who were to go through similar persecutions; *i. e.* you see the exercise of the grace of brotherly *love*;—and yet all this moderated and made perfectly consistent with a state of bliss, by the exercise, at the same time, of those other two cardinal graces of God’s saints, which in heaven as well as on earth; with the redeemed as well as the conflicting Christian; for ever as well as for our few short years of earthly being, characterize the servants of Christ—the graces, I mean, of *Faith* in God’s hidden purposes, and *Hope* of God’s further manifestations.† “It was said to them, that they should *rest*,” rest, *i. e.* on the hidden purposes of God concerning their brethren who were still conflicting with the world—exercise that *Faith* which resolves all things perplexing into God’s sovereign pleasure;—sympathise, but without impatience; love their brethren, but without anxiety; and *wait*

* Prostrate as suppliants at its feet; (for the altar was a lofty structure.)

† 1 Cor. xiii. 13. “And now *abideth* faith, hope, charity, these three.” Gifts are temporary; graces are eternal. The *accomplishments* of the Christian by which he makes a figure in this world, and which therefore he is too ready to prefer, shall with this world vanish away: the *dispositions* of the Christian, towards God and towards his brethren, these go on with him into the world which is to come.

upon the Lord. And this was more than *said* to them. It was commended by expressive symbols, which should sustain their *Hope*. "White robes were given unto them" — the emblems of final triumph, for the universal church as well as for themselves, were put around them; as pledges that God's glory should assuredly be displayed; his retributive justice be honoured; disorder, and rebellion, and cruelty, and sin, not always have the upper hand; but, "when their brethren should be fulfilled;" the number of God's elect accomplished, then should his kingdom come; his will be done *on earth* as it is done in heaven; and He himself, the Lord of hosts, should "REIGN before his ancients gloriously!"

Thus then you see from the word of God, that the Christian's condition after death is one of immediate life—and consciousness—and social sympathy: that is, that *Death occasions no interruption of what we at present enjoy*. And would you have still further warrant for this Hope, it is supplied to you by example, as well as promise; in facts as well as words. Look to the believer's union with Christ, and to the example and pledge which is afforded to him in the history of Christ, that not all of him shall die, nor fall into unconsciousness; but that like to his Forerunner and Representative, he shall pass only *from one condition of active being to another*. What was the state of Christ from the period of his crucifixion to his rising again? Was his soul plunged into Lethean slumber while his body lay in the grave? Were his spiritual powers paralysed while his bodily senses slept? Had he not, rather, expressly told his Apostles, "A little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father." John xvi. 17, and xiv. 28. Did he not say to the dying thief, "To day shalt thou be *with me in Paradise*?" Luke xxiii. 43. Was he not, though "put to death in the flesh, yet quickened

in the spirit?"* 1 Peter iii. 19. Did he not "in that spirit go and preach to the spirits in prison"—proclaim to them his triumph and sovereignty? 1 Peter iii. 20. Was he not "seen of angels,"—presented to the homage of the hosts of heaven? 1 Tim. iii. 16. Heb. i. 6. There was no pause of life and energy between the death of Jesus and his resurrection. And neither, therefore, need the believer in Jesus fear a pause of life and energy between *his* death, and *his* final, however long delayed, resurrection. "In my Father's house are many mansions, I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am there ye may be also." John xiv. 2, 3.

And O then the peace, the hope, with which the Christian may look to death! Death is truly the gate of life! All its mournful accessories of disease, and pain, and dissolution, are but the *breaking down the barrier* which shuts out from liberty and joy. We do not become nonentities when we pass on to the world of essential entity; nor shadows by entering into the region of reality. We do not put off our proper being, when we put off the *earthly clothing* of that being. We do not lose our *Self*, when we lose our flesh. But all that you now are as a member of Christ and child of God, continues with you as an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. Do you know *now* what it is to live to God—to love God, serve God, hold communion with God, exercise faith and hope in God, and glow with zeal and love for all the family of God? And shall the icy touch of death freeze up, in a moment, the genial current of your soul? Shall the Christian, to whom death is called a *gain*, be by that death despoiled of all his present patrimony? Has God begun to quicken you by his Spirit, in this world of *sense*, and shall that Spirit fail you in the world of *spirit*? Are you

* Πνεύματι. As to his body he died, as to his spirit he still lived. Comp. ch. iv. 6. John vi. 63.

alive to God in this region of darkness, and shall you become *dead* to God in that atmosphere of light? Nay rather—we are taught to think that God “*takes to himself the soul*” of our departed brother in the Lord. We are encouraged, even when the gloomy tomb and the mouldering body are immediately before our eyes, to say, “Almighty God, WITH WHOM DO LIVE THE SPIRITS of them that depart hence in the Lord, and *with whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity*, we give thee hearty thanks when it doth please thee to deliver thy people out of the miseries of this sinful world!”

But the Certainities of Revelation with respect to our future being stop not here. They assure us not only that death occasions no interruption of what we at present enjoy, but also that it AFFORDS THE INTRODUCTION TO WHAT WE AT PRESENT ARE WANTING IN.

For the state of the Christian after death consists, in the first place, in *complete immunity from trial*.

The present world is a world of probation. That is the specific light in which we should regard it. And the more we look at it as such the better shall we reconcile to ourselves the many difficulties with which its history is cumbered. *This world is a world of probation*. And for probation there must be tests: and these tests must be furnished from all departments of our nature and condition. And therefore, where there is to be probation there must be provided pain and sorrow for the physical in us—temptation for the moral in us—perplexity for the mental in us—depression for the spiritual in us. And all these tests, so far from being spared to *the Christian*, in particular, become often multiplied, in order to the very end for which he has been brought to the knowledge of Christ and the love of God,—even his sanctification. The

very exercise of his graces requires them. The very growth of his character demands them. The very prayers which he is continually breathing forth for moral improvement find their answer in them. Affliction, temptation, difficulty, doubt, these are the very medicines by whose salutary action there must be roused the vital energy within us, and our spiritual recovery advanced.

Trial, then, is our portion now, because now our state is one of probation. But the life hereafter is no state of probation, and therefore none of trial. Nothing is plainer throughout the word of God than this ; that while probation lasts, up to the moment of our passing out of the body, it goes not onward with us when from that body we have passed out. The contrast is most marked in Scripture. The change exhibited is complete. As great as that from the rollings of the open ocean to the glassy smoothness of the sheltered haven. On one side, turbulence ; on the other, peace. On one, the need of watchfulness, effort, skill, and boldness : on the other, only to furl our sails, to drop our anchor, and to ride with gentle undulation on the bosom of the friendly deep. Look at one testimony to this blessed change, in Rev. xiv. 13, "I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may *rest from their labours.*" Look at another in Rev. vii. 13—17, (where you *see* the blessed spirits breathing nothing but tranquillity, and reposing from the toil and heat of earthly being in the sheltering groves of heaven !) "What are these which are arrayed in white robes ? and whence came they ? These are they which *came out of great tribulation*, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of

the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters : and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes !” O the inconceivable translation, from sickness to health—from pain to ease—from the weariness of conflict to the repose of triumph ! “ There remaineth *a rest* for the people of God !” Heb. iv. 9.

But the Christian will gain by death, yet further, *complete deliverance from sin*. Now, alas ! even when outward trial is spared him, he has daily to mourn over his exceeding insufficiency for the service of God. I know not, indeed, whether we do not sometimes *create for ourselves* an anxiety on this point, which we ought not to feel ; whether our zeal is always so pure as it is vehement ; whether our desires and our struggles for more of what *we fancy* usefulness are not often the cravings of a spiritual ambition, rather than the quiet surrender of ourselves to do *or to suffer* God’s will. “ They also serve who wait.” It was a maxim of one of the seven wise men, Do not attempt impossibilities. And God’s requirements of his people are limited by reference to the powers which he has given us, and the opportunities which he vouchsafes. “ As every man *hath received the gift*, even so let him minister the same as a good steward of the *manifold* grace of God.” 1 Pet. iv. 10. And hence you see the holy Paul, the most energetic of Christ’s servants, at the same time entirely submissive *as to the manner* in which he should serve him. It mattered not to him *how much* he was enabled to do, provided only he were full of the spirit of *readiness* for doing. “ For he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee ; for my strength is perfected in weakness :” (that is, the power of my grace is then most fully manifested when the agents I employ are nothing in themselves ; 1 Cor. i. 25—30.) “ Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in infirmities,” (instead of mur-

muring at them as injurious to my Master's cause,) "that the power of Christ may rest upon me!" 2 Cor. xii. 9.

But still the evil remains. We cannot serve God as we would. We do not serve him as we can. It is our hourly shame, that even when the spirit is willing the flesh is weak. And how then must we estimate the blessedness of that state, where, with the spirit yet more willing, there shall be no flesh to be weak! Where to will, shall be to do! Yet nothing less than this is set before us as the portion of the liberated saints. "They are before the throne of God, and *serve him day and night* in his temple!" Rev. vii. 15.

Nor is this all. Death, to the Christian, is his introduction, thirdly, to *complete enjoyment of the presence of his Lord*. This is the consummation of what we are now in need of. For we possess a *spiritual*, as well as a *sentient*, and *moral*, nature. And while for the sentient we need exemption from sorrow, and for the moral, deliverance from sin; nothing will suit and satisfy the spiritual, but full communion with our blessed Lord. For what *is* that spiritual nature? It is the impress of the image of God. And in whom is that image manifested in all its fulness but in the only-begotten Son of God? How does it shine forth to the angels in heaven, but through him who is the visible ray from the invisible fount of Deity; "the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person?" And how then shall the godlike which has been quickened in our souls reach its proper blessedness, but as it comes into the full beholding and the abiding presence of Him in whom all the Father shines? Whence, all the Christian's happiness is summed up by our Lord in this one point. All, that in other parts of Scripture, is expressed by various images, as the particular occasion most required—sometimes as rest to the weary—sometimes as comfort to the sorrowful—sometimes

as satisfaction to the hungerer after righteousness—is comprehended by the Son of God in that one single Idea of His PRESENCE. “If any man serve me, let him follow me; and *where I am, there shall also my servant be.*” John xii. 26. “Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me, *be with me where I am*; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me!” John xvii. 24. This, I say, is the consummation of all we need. And this we are raised to when our ransomed spirits, with our last sigh, escape the prison of the flesh. Paul judged that to “depart” from this world was to be “*with Christ,*”—to be “absent from the body” was to be “*present with the Lord!*” And the dying Stephen cried, “I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God!—Lord Jesus *receive my spirit!*” Acts vii. 56, 59.

See then, in conclusion, how essential to our very *understanding* of the hope of the Christian as regards the permanency of his being, is a *spiritual union and communion now*, with him who is the resurrection and the life. It is only “by eating him that we can *live* by him.” That is, it is only by receiving him *now* into our hearts by faith, that we can partake of his never-failing life hereafter. Spiritual life and eternal life are spoken of in Scripture as not so much two things, as one and the same thing in two different stages of developement. The one the root, the other the full-blown flower. The one the infancy, the other the manhood, of the child of God. Grace is glory begun. And glory is grace made perfect. “He,” says the Lord, “that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath*” (not shall have) “everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but *is passed*”—has passed already, (the tense is the pluperfect)

by the very fact of that his hearing of my word, and faith in God—"from death unto life." John v. 24.

And hence it is that it is a *work of the Holy Ghost* to form in us the hope of this permanency of being with our Lord. Because the indwelling of the Spirit, as the medium of Christ's presence to us now, can give the only solid pledge to us of participation in his presence hereafter. How did Paul know that he should when "absent from the body" be "present with the Lord?" Because, (he tells us,) "God had *wrought him for this selfsame thing*;" had moulded his spirit by regenerating grace into the capacity for, and therefore the assurance of, this consummation; "who also" (he goes on) "has *given unto us the earnest of the Spirit*." 2 Cor. v. 5.

And O then what an *experimental* thing is Christian hope—real, lively hope! How impossible to derive it from a general promise without us, unless it be authenticated by an answering pledge within us. It is the Spirit's work, you see, is such a hope. And hence the Apostle prays that the Romans "may abound in hope *through the power of the Holy Ghost*." Rom. xv. 13. What if, peradventure, you feel *your* hope to be feeble, dim, uncertain, scarcely deserving the name? Is it, perhaps, that you have not yet been "*wrought for this selfsame thing*" by the Spirit of God? been brought into that spiritual frame which is the soil in which true hope expands? Are you wanting in faith? wanting in love? wanting in that repentance, renewal, regeneration, of which faith and love are the sign? Then, no wonder if you are wanting also in hope! It is "*Christ in you*," says Paul to the Colossians, "which forms the *hope of glory*." Col. i. 27. "If any man have *not the Spirit of Christ*," he says elsewhere, "he is none of his. But *if Christ be in you*, the body indeed must die because of sin, but *the spirit shall live* because of righteousness!" Rom. viii. 10.

SECTION III.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

WHY has our blessed Lord constituted a CHURCH—a communion of saints? Because man, by himself, remains only half developed. Because both his holiness and happiness require, for their nourishment, *communication*. Because, in a word, each man was made to be one of many, and only in conjunction with those many is fully a man. The social instinct is an essential element of our nature; and it is therefore impossible so to regard ourselves, as not to take in *the relation in which we stand to other beings*; as not to perceive, that our condition must be essentially affected, whether for good or for evil, by that relation.

And hence it results that, as regards the world *before us*, as well as the world around us, we must look at things as social, as well as individual, beings; we cannot but have an interest not only in our *personal destination*, but in that destination *as related to the destination* of the great human family with which we are connected. Christian hope depends necessarily on the solution of a threefold question:—What shall become of *ourselves as individuals*?—What shall become of ourselves *in relation to the world* of which we form a part?—And what shall become of *that world itself* of which we form a part?

Now, the first of these questions is sufficiently answered by the doctrine of *the permanency of the soul*. The second cannot receive its adequate solution without the doctrine of *the resurrection of the body*. The permanency of the soul, or our *continued spiritual life in Christ beyond this earth*, concerns us

as individuals. The resurrection of the body, or our *return to a sensuous life upon this earth*, concerns us, both as members of Christ's church, and of the world which he came to redeem into a kingdom for his saints.

And what then is the essence of that hope which we profess in our Creed, when we declare, "I believe IN THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY?"

Our right answer to this question depends, I think, upon three other preliminary ones:—What *is* my body? What *my relation* to it? And what the *end and purpose* for which it is given to me?

First, *What is my body?* Is it my *Self*? my proper being? Most certainly No! For then, the dissolution of my body would be the dissolution of my self, my proper being; which (as we have seen in a former section) both Reason and Revelation forbid us to suppose.

And is it then *a part* of my self? a part so strictly, that, without it, this self must be imperfect, mutilated, fragmentary? Again, most certainly No! For then, my separation from the body would be a dividing of my self; which, again, both reason and revelation forbid me to suppose. It is, indeed, not uncommon to find Man defined as a being made up of soul *and* body; as if each of these parts were equally essential elements of his being; and the Individual, Man, could not be conceived in his completeness but as the *compound* formed by the union of both. But then, if this were so, all hope of continued integral existence after death—all hope especially of consciousness—all hope of personal identity—all hope, that is, of what the word of God (as we have seen) assures to us as our privilege in Christ, is gone! For then, it would not be *the man* who would survive the grave; but only *a part* of the

man;—a fragment which, when joined to another fragment, from which by death it is divided, would *make up* the Man; but which, by itself, *cannot be the Man*. Then, when my body dies, I cannot say that *I* survive. My *Self* is gone. My individuality is dispersed abroad. My personal identity is destroyed. One portion of my self has fled in one direction; another, in another. One, crumbled into dust; another dissipated into air. I AM, and I AM NOT, at the same moment! And therefore, this system of matter which I call my body, is most assuredly, neither *my Self*—nor an essential *part* of my Self.

And what, then, is THE RELATION of this system of matter to my self? It is the relation, as of a dwelling to its inhabitant—of a temporary tent to its permanent owner—of an adventitious garment to a substantial being—of an unconscious instrument to an intelligent agent—of a *thing*, which is to be kept down, to a *person* who is to rule. “We dwell” says the book of Job, “in *houses* of clay.” Job. iv. 19. “If our *earthly house*” says Paul, “were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” 2 Cor. v. 1. “I must shortly put off *this my tabernacle*” says St. Peter. 2 Peter i. 14. “We that are in *this tabernacle*” says St. Paul, “do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be *unclothed*, but clothed upon.” 2 Cor. v. 4. “Yield not your members,” he exhorts the Romans, “as *instruments* of unrighteousness unto sin.” Rom. vi. 13. “I *keep under my body*,” he says of himself, “and bring it into subjection.” 1 Cor. ix. 27.

Whence also you see the END AND PURPOSE for which this body is given to man. It is as the *medium of communication* between the immaterial spirit and sensible things; the instru-

ment by which we receive impressions from a sensuous world and produce impressions on that world in return; the indispensable condition for our intercourse *on earth*, with the things and the persons on earth. It is that by which I *manifest* my thoughts, my feelings, my will, to others; and receive the manifestations of their thoughts, and feelings, and will, to me. As *individual* beings, there are states, even here, in which we *seem* almost independent of its instrumentality, or at least insensible of its presence. "I knew a man in Christ" says the Apostle, "whether *in the body* I cannot tell, or *out of the body* I cannot tell, God knoweth, such an one caught up to the third heaven." 2 Cor. xii. 2. But then, as *social* beings, in a world of sense, it is indispensable to us. We can know and be known; we can sympathise and be sympathised with; we can act and be acted on, only as we look out, as it were, through the windows of our earthly habitation—as we speak and move, and feel, and act, by the agency of the wondrous machine in which we are inclosed. God himself—the Spirit—could make himself *manifest* in a world of sense, only under the forms of sense. "There stood three *men* by Abraham"—their appearance was no other: though Abraham soon found with regard to one of them, (not from external but internal evidence,) that "he stood before the LORD." Gen. xviii. 2, 16, 22. The *Son of God* could come into association with the earth which he was to redeem, and the men whom he was to teach, and succour, and guide, only by being "made flesh" (*i. e.* taking up his tabernacle in a body) "among us." John i. 14. And just for the very reason that he was to save, not merely by the fiat of divine volition, but by *the training men into the knowledge of himself*, and the communion of his Spirit, so that he who sanctified and they who were sanctified might be all of one family, and he might not be ashamed to call them brethren, saying "I will declare thy name unto *my brethren; in the*

midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee"—just for this reason, (the Apostle argues,) "even as the children are *partakers of flesh and blood*, he also himself likewise took part of the same." Heb. ii. 14.

And now then I trust, we are prepared to understand the doctrine, and to see the necessity, of that "Resurrection of the body" which the Scripture assures to us. Body is *the organ of sensuous manifestation*, and thereby of *social intercourse* in a world of sense. And consequently, the restoration of a *body** is essential to the restoration of this *sensuous manifestation*, the renewal of social intercourse in a world of sense. Body is not indispensable to *mental life*—not to consciousness—not to sympathy with spiritual beings—not to recognition, feeling, action, *in a spiritual world*. But it is indispensable to *sensuous life* and to communication with a sensuous world,—this sensuous world in which we now are living, and which in the last great day, though ransomed from the bondage of sin, and of death, and of decay, and of every-

* I say "a body," because we must remember that though the Scriptures speak of a "resurrection of *the body*," they expressly caution us that it will not be *the body* as it was laid in the grave,—the system of *flesh and blood* which crumbles into the dust; but *a body* of far nobler elements and qualities, to be conceived only by the *negatives* of our earthly tabernacle—in *contrast with its imperfections*—not a "natural" body; not one of "corruption;" not one of "dishonour;" not one of "weakness;" but on the contrary a body of "incorruption;" of "glory;" of "power;" and in a word, "a *spiritual body*." What indeed is meant by a *spiritual body*, except *in contrast with our present natural one*, we know not: our conception of it must be entirely *negative*; we can form no *positive* notion. But still it is "a body," though not "*the body*;" and a body in such a sense "sensible" as to render it a fit medium of communication in the regenerated earth. "Even a glorified body" (says Professor Miller; Letter to Dr. Pusey, p. 51) "must still possess those inseparable qualities of natural bodies by which they are *limited in regard to time and place*, and become OBJECTS OF SENSE; or the doctrine of a resurrection after death would be reduced to unmeaning sounds."

thing grossly material, shall even then be *sensuous* still. And hence the *resurrection of the body* is represented in Scripture as *coincident with the renovation of this world*, and with the return of the Lord, with his saints, therein to dwell. And the *essence* of this Resurrection is the Restoration of our *relation to this world*, as the dwelling-place of the redeemed—the kingdom of the Christ on earth—the new heavens and new earth, when “the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God.” Rev. xxi. 3.

Observe this fact in its several particulars. See in how many passages of the word of God this *coincidence of the resurrection of the body with Christ's second coming, and the public manifestation and glory of his saints in a regenerated world*, is set forth.

First; we are told that the time of Christ's second coming will be the time of *manifestation of his saints*. “Ye are now” says Paul to the Colossians, “dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God;”—(you are to count yourselves aliens in this present sinful world; your relation to it destroyed, and you yourselves taken up with Christ into the seclusion from it to which he has risen;)—“but when Christ, who is our life, *shall APPEAR*” (or manifest himself; when he on his second coming shall renew his sensible relation to this earth and bring it into its promised state of regeneration, as the habitation of his Majesty) “then shall *ye also APPEAR*” (be manifested, and come out into sensible relation with it again) “with him, in his glory.” Col. iii. 3, 4. Just as the same Apostle tells the Thessalonians, “If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God *bring*” (bring back again, when he shall manifest himself) “*with him.*” 1 Thess. iv. 14. “Then,” says the Lord himself, “shall the

righteous *shine forth* as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Matt. xiii. 43.

But next we are told that this manifestation of the saints, with their returning Lord, *will bring them into renewed connexion with this lower world*. For the "kingdom of Christ," which he shall come again to set up, is the reign of God *upon this earth*. The "restoration of all things," which he will then accomplish, will be the restoration of this lower world from sin, corruption, curse, and decay, into "a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." Whence the promises of Christ represent the "kingdom of heaven," the time of "consolation," and the "inheriting the earth," as identical. "Blessed are the depressed in spirit, for theirs is *the kingdom of heaven*. Blessed are they that mourn, for they *shall be comforted*. Blessed are the meek, for they shall *inherit the earth*." Matt. v. 3, 5. And the *expectation of this*, forms part of the joy of heaven: "Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we *shall reign on the earth*." Rev. v. 10.

Whence, therefore, in the third place, we are told, that this time of the manifestation of the saints with Christ, being thus the time of their renewed connexion with this lower world, is the time when they *shall receive such bodies as shall fit them for such connexion*; the time (that is) of the "resurrection of the body" which our Creed looks forward to.

For, while this world is spoken of as regenerated, and restored, and made new, it is manifestly a *sensuous* world still; a world, (that is) though not of gross material elements, exposed to decay and death, yet capable of *sensible manifestation to sensible natures*. And it is such a sensible nature, (though no longer *material*, but refined and purified as a fit organ for the glorified spirit,) which is promised to us in that day. "Our conversation," says St. Paul, "is in heaven; from whence

also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ ; who shall *change our vile body* that it may be fashioned *like unto his glorious body*, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue *all things* unto himself." Phil. iii. 20, 21. Observe how, in connexion with the second coming of the Deliverer, from heaven, the Apostle looks for the transformation of the body into a substance no longer vile, *i. e.* base, corrupt, and mortal, by the exertion of the same energy through which that Deliverer will then subdue *all* the fallen creation into harmony with his glorious nature. Which intimate connexion of the resurrection of the body with the setting up of Christ's kingdom and the abolishing of sin and death throughout the world, is argued out at length, by the same Apostle, in the fifteenth chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians ; where, having asserted that " As in Adam all die even so in Christ shall all be made alive, but every man in his own order, Christ the first-fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's *at his coming* ;" he goes on to declare the *extent* of the transformation which shall then take place ; namely, that what has been sown a *natural* body (*i. e.* corruptible, mean, and weak, unworthy to be the tabernacle of the regenerate soul), shall then be raised a *spiritual* body (*i. e.* incorruptible, glorious, powerful, the fit instrument of a glorified spirit) ; so that " as we have borne the image of the earthly we shall then bear the image of the heavenly." O blessed hope ! O glorious consummation ! Not confined to our *personal* advantage, but having reference to our *social relations with the world, of which we are part*. And therefore a consummation for which that world is represented, in that noble burst of prophetic poetry in the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, as, with an earnest longing, waiting, and crying out ! " For the earnest expectation of the creature" (the whole creation, all this lower world, in all its parts) " waiteth for *the manifestation of the sons*

of God ;" (their manifestation in that glory of their returning Lord to which, in the 17th verse, the Apostle had just referred,) "for the creature was made subject to vanity" (to meanness, corruption and death) "not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same ; in hope that the creature itself also" (even all material nature) "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." (Pain, indeed, but that of hope ; travail, but as that of a woman with child, who looks out for the joyful moment when it shall be said, a man is born into the world!) "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit," (in whom the Spirit of Christ dwells as the anticipation and pledge of that entire redemption which, beginning in the soul, shall finally be extended to even our earthly tabernacle*) "even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, *the redemption of our body*" — its ultimate deliverance into that freedom from earthliness, and sin, and death, which shall render it fit for the inhabitation of the immortal soul ; and suited to the sensible manifestation of that soul in all its glory, *to* and *with* a purified and regenerated world !

Such seems to me the testimony of the word of God on this mysterious subject. A testimony, however, that unavoidably transcends our powers of conception. It presents itself to our *faith*, not our comprehension. But for our *faith*, how glorious is the prospect which it opens out to us ! How full the blessedness which it points to ! A blessedness, to which the immediate happiness of the departed saint shall be but as the

* See v. 11. "If the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall *also quicken your mortal bodies* because of his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

drop before the shower. True, that the happiness, as the holiness, of the disembodied spirit will be at once *complete* ; but still it will not be *completed* ; it will be *perfect*, but not *final* ; it will be full for the time then present, but not incapable of indefinite enlargement. The glorified saint will find nothing lacking, to *that stage of his being, and that sphere of his action* ; but he will not therefore be restrained from that *unlimited growth*, to which, in each new stage of being and new sphere of action, he is destined. Even as our great forerunner has already reached the joy set before him, and sat down on the right hand of the throne of God ; and yet has still “to see his seed, to prolong his days, to find the pleasure of the Lord prospering in his hand, to see of the travail of his soul in all its infinite consequences, and to be satisfied.” Isa. liii. 10, 11. Even as he is *already entered* into his glory, and yet shall come again “*to be glorified* in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, *in that day* !” 2 Thess. i. 10. For then shall the mystery of God be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets ; then shall we triumph with wondering adoration in the completion of God’s purposes—the regeneration of God’s world—the setting up of God’s kingdom—the gathering together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him—the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory !

SECTION IV.

THE LIFE EVERLASTING.

IN that exquisite composition, the Burial Service of our Church, the bereaved Christian is taught, after *thanking* God “that it hath pleased him to deliver his departed brother out of the miseries of this sinful world,” to pass onward into *prayer* “that it may please God of his gracious goodness shortly to accomplish the number of his elect, and to hasten his kingdom; that we,” (says the Church,) “with all them that are departed in the true faith of thy holy name, may have our *perfect consummation and bliss*, both in body and soul, in *thy eternal and everlasting glory*, through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

And herein does the Church express in *prayer* that hope, which in her Creed she has made an article of confession; the hope, namely, of a resurrection of the body *to everlasting life*; —to our enjoyment (*i. e.*) through its instrumentality, of all the blessedness which is promised in Christ’s kingdom through the everlasting age.

Which intimate connexion of the last sentence of our Creed, “the life everlasting,” with that immediately preceding it, “the resurrection of the body,” as forming in fact part of the whole idea therein intended to be confessed, is indicated by the omission of it in some creeds, because included in the notion of the resurrection of the body; and by its addition in others, not as a distinct clause, but as explanatory of the time and nature of that resurrection. Thus an ancient writer says, “What sort of resurrection of the body? Not like that of

Lazarus; *as is taught us by the addition, 'unto EVERLASTING LIFE.'*"*

This clause, therefore, is perfective of that glorious cluster of objects, by the presentation of which the Holy Ghost excites that Christian HOPE which is one of the cardinal graces He has to form and nourish in the Christian church. Do you look out on the mysterious future, the world *before* you, with an interest expanding in proportion as you take in *all the relations* in which you stand to the world *around* you? Does your Christian Hope require a field of view as wide as that of your Christian Charity? To such an interest and sympathy the word of God, and the Apostles' Creed, which is the summary of the main truths of that word, respond, by disclosing to you all that is needful to be known, not only concerning your *own continued existence* after death; (which is the doctrine of "the Resurrection," generally, as a rising from death to life, a permanency of the soul;)—but also concerning your future *relation to the world around you* of which you form a part; (which is the doctrine of "the Resurrection of the body" specifically;)—and therefore, *along with this*, concerning *the final fortunes of that world itself*, when Christ shall come to redeem it into the kingdom of his glory;—which is the doctrine of "*the life everlasting.*"

For when we say "I believe in THE LIFE EVERLASTING," it is the same as saying, I believe in the coming of that glorious time, after the final resurrection, (that "age to come" as the Scriptures phrase it,) when the kingdom of God shall be set up on earth, and Christ shall reign triumphant over a regenerated world. You learn this, not only from the general tenor of those numerous passages which refer to "eternal

* Quomodo carnis resurrectionem? Ne forte putet aliquis quomodo Lazari, ut scias non sic esse, additum est *in vitam æternam. De Symb.* in PEARSON.

life," or, more emphatically, "life;" and to the "world, or age to come;" and to "the kingdom of heaven;" and to "the last time;" and the time of "salvation," and of "redemption;" all which passages clearly show that by these various phrases is indicated one and the same great final consummation: but also from the frequent *juxtaposition* of these terms, and their *exchange*, in the same continuous passage, the one for the other. Thus, for example, in Matthew xix. 16, you find a certain ruler asking our Lord, What shall I do that I may have *eternal life*? "Eternal life" is the subject-matter of his question; and the subject-matter, therefore, of all that Jesus refers to in his answers to this ruler, and his conversation with his disciples, onward to the 30th verse. But, this term "eternal life," our Lord exchanges, in the 17th verse, for the shorter and more emphatic word "life;" ("if thou wilt enter into *life*, keep the commandments;") and again, in the 23d and 24th verses for the equivalent terms "the kingdom of heaven," and "the kingdom of God:" ("A rich man shall hardly enter into *the kingdom of heaven*. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into *the kingdom of God*.") And if you would learn more accurately to what age and condition of the world these terms refer, you have this set before you, beyond all mistake, in the subsequent promise of Christ to his Apostles in v. 28, "Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me," (have done that which this young ruler with all his desire for "eternal life" has shrunk from doing,) "*in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*" Or, as St. Luke has expressed the *same promise*, on the *same occasion*; "There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for *the kingdom of*

God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and *in the world to come* LIFE EVERLASTING." Luke xviii. 30.

And just the same sort of interpretation of the terms which describe the future blessedness, is afforded us by St. Peter in the passage extending from the 3rd to the 13th verse of the first chapter of his first Epistle. He begins by blessing God for begetting his people to a *lively hope*, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And if you ask to what this hope has respect, you find, in v. 4, that it is "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away," now kept in heaven, but in readiness to be revealed, or brought out from its storehouse* in "*the last time.*" Which time is described as that wherein their faith should "be found unto praise and honour and glory at *the appearing of Jesus Christ,*" v. 7;—when they should "rejoice with joy unspeakable and *full of glory,*" v. 8;—and when they should "receive the end" (the reward and consummation) "of their faith, even the *salvation* of their souls." v. 9. "Of which *salvation*" the Apostle goes on to tell us, v. 10, 11, "the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace" (the mercy and blessedness) "that should come unto you; searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and *the glory which should follow.*" And concerning which "salvation," or "grace," or "glory," St. Peter proceeds, accordingly, to exhort his readers, v. 13, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope *to the end,* for the *grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*"

* See Ephes. i. 3. "God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings" (laid up) "in heavenly places in Christ;" and Col. i. 5, "the hope which is laid up for you in heaven."

“Everlasting life,” then, is the period of the blessedness of the everlasting age ;—of the last time ;—of the revelation, or bringing forth, of the inheritance now reserved, or kept, for us in heaven ;—of the attaining the salvation predicted for us ;—of the entering into the praise and honour and glory and grace which shall be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. It is the period of the world to come ;—of the kingdom of heaven ;—of the kingdom of God ;—of the regeneration of all things, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory. And therefore to profess our belief in that “everlasting life,” is to proclaim our hope that in that last time, that inheritance reserved for us, that salvation predicted to us, that grace which is to be brought unto us, that world to come, that kingdom of heaven, that regeneration of all things, that glory of our Lord, *we* shall partake of his triumph,—we shall sympathise with his redeemed creation—we shall share in the fortunes and exult in the glories, of *the world of which we form a part.*

In this present age, indeed, this blessed consummation can be to us an object only of *Hope* : of that Hope which springs, not from calculation of probabilities, but simply from dependence upon promises—the promises of One who cannot lie. “In hope of *eternal life*,” says the Apostle, “which God, *that cannot lie*, promised before the world began.” Titus i. 2. And the nourishment, therefore, of such a hope, is specially a work of the Holy Ghost. Not on the basis of earthly reasoning can it be built. Not in the “cloud-land” of this lower atmosphere in which imagination delights to expatiate, can its foundations be laid. But from the deep serene of the unfathomable sky does its bright beam come forth to us, “as a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn, and the day star arise in our hearts.” 2 Pet. i. 19. “We are saved” (says St. Paul, in connexion with this very subject) “by hope.”

Our final salvation — the redemption of our body, and the deliverance of the whole creation from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God—is a matter that even we, regenerated Christians, who have the Spirit as the first-fruits, can only look forward to, wait for, and, through the witness of that Spirit, *hope* for. Now, we are like heirs of vast possessions, not yet of age. Now, we are the inheritors of Canaan, still on pilgrimage in the wilderness. But we know that we *shall* receive “a kingdom that cannot be moved.” Heb. xii. 28. We are “made heirs according to the *hope* of eternal life.” Titus iii. 7. And therefore we “look for that *blessed hope*, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ!” Titus ii. 13.

And O what an object of hope is this! “The life everlasting!” “The life” as the Nicene Creed expresses it, “of the world to come!” Observe what a *final perfecting of all things* is declared by the terms in which this hope is assured to us. St. Peter calls it an “inheritance.” 1 Pet. i. 4. St. Paul denominates it the “inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God;” Eph. v. 5. “The inheritance of the saints in light.” Col. i. 12. The “eternal inheritance.” Heb. ix. 15. And in all these phrases there is a manifest reference to the promise and hope, vouchsafed to the Israelites, of that land of Canaan which was the type of the predicted kingdom of God. “He hath remembered his covenant for ever,” (says the Psalmist,) “the word which he commanded to a thousand generations, saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your *inheritance*.” Ps. cv. 8, 11. “Ye are not as yet come” (said Moses to his people) “to *the rest and the inheritance*, which the Lord your God giveth you. But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the Lord your God giveth you to inherit, and when he giveth you rest from all your enemies

round about, so that ye dwell in safety ; then there shall be a place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there—and ye *shall rejoice* before the Lord your God.” Deut. xii. 9—11. “ Thou shall bring them in,” he sings with exulting confidence, “ and plant them in the mountain of *thine inheritance* ; in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in ; in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. *The Lord shall reign for ever and ever !*” Exod. xv. 17, 18. Now, *there* is the adumbration, faint indeed, but which the Lord himself affords you, of that “ rest and inheritance ” which awaits the tribes of the redeemed in “ the life everlasting.” What Canaan was to Israel that is “ the kingdom of God ” to the whole world ;—the consummation of a long series of labours ; the repose after conflict ; the peace and abundance, and glory of a land flowing with milk and honey, after the perils and privations of the wilderness.

And who can look at this present world—*our* world—the house of our birth ; the cradle of our infancy ; the nursery of our childhood ; the school of our varied discipline in youth and manhood ; the scene, truly, of our cares, but also of our joys ; —who can look round it with a filial interest, and not long to share these its future fortunes ? fortunes which we know that God has destined for it—fortunes by which he will wind off the long and tangled web of his providences, and vindicate his goodness, and display his justice, and bring men to adore his wisdom. Now, you see things in confusion. Now, the most earnest and devout is baffled when he seeks to explain to himself or others the ways of God. We have a divine tradition that all things were made perfect. Yet no one is hardy enough to assert that now they are so ; unless it be truly some spruce philosopher who has determined to smother facts with words. And what then are we to think, and what to conjecture, and what to hope, concerning this lost creation of

God? The Bible tells us, that what we know not now we shall know hereafter. It reveals to us that a process is going on which, like all growth, must assume strange shapes. And it points to "the life everlasting," as the time for bringing out all things in their full proportion—the time of "restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." Acts iii. 21.

But observe next, what a *final splendour of all things* is assured to us by the promises of "the life everlasting." How does St. Paul paraphrase this term in his epistle to the Romans? "To them" (he says) "who seek for *glory, and honour*, and immortality, eternal life." Rom. ii. 7. "Glory, and honour!" all that is splendid and dignified! all that is intimated by Ezekiel in that one simple, sublime image, "Behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east,—and *the earth shined with his glory!*" Ezek. xliii. 2. All that St. John depicts to us when he says, "He showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven, *having the glory of God*; and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." Rev. xxi. 10, 11. All that St. Peter conveys to us by that single epithet "undefiled"—an inheritance not like that of Canaan desecrated, notwithstanding its relative holiness, by the inhabitants thereof; but truly "the *holy land*," the *sacred* territory, whose people shall be all righteous! "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until *the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness*, and the salvation thereof *as a lamp that burneth*. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness and all kings *thy glory!*" Isa. lxii. 1, 2.

And what then, when we consider, once more, what a *final*

permanence of all things is assured to us by that term “the life everlasting!” Now, every thing is exposed to change; decay; dissolution. Then, “there shall be no more death!” Now, the loveliest things bloom but for a moment, and the best things come like shadows and so depart. But then, “the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God!” Then, “the last enemy shall be destroyed, which is death!” The inheritance to which St. Peter points the hope of the Christian is “incorruptible and that fadeth not away.” That garden of Eden shall never be destroyed. The flowers of that paradise shall never wither. The verdure of that land shall never dry up. “He shewed me” says St. John, “a pure river of *water of life*, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.” Rev. xxii. 1. “And it shall come to pass,” says Ezekiel, “that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall *live*.—And by the river, upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, *whose leaf shall not fade*, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed; it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters *they issued out of the sanctuary*.” Ezek. xlvii. 9, 12.

Nor yet does even prophetic imagery such as this convey to us all that is included in the phrase “the life everlasting.” For it intimates not only that nothing shall then fade away; but also that all things shall be *going on brightening* through the endless ages of eternity. “The kingdoms of this world” sang the heavenly voices in the Apocalypse, “are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign *for ever and ever* ;” (Rev. xi. 15) *i. e.* not only in that “age to come,” in which he shall display himself in triumph; but onward through the infinite series of *ages upon ages* (εἰς τοὺς

αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων) of which that age shall be but as the first term. And what is predicted of the King is equally predicted of the followers of that King, and of the region of their blessedness. "There shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and *they shall reign* FOR EVER AND EVER." Rev. xxii. 5. Nor is this constantly increasing progression a mere prolongation of being; it is a developement of all those glorious objects—those visions of God—those revelations of his wisdom, and love, and power, which stimulate to constantly intensifying wonder, praise, and adoration. "For to this end," St. Paul assures us, "God has raised us up together with Christ, that *through the ages to come*"—throughout the endless series of successive developements of our being, and of this world's blessedness, and of God's perfections,—“he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” Eph. ii. 6, 7.

And here then I pause. I venture not beyond the Scripture declarations concerning things which, like the visions of the Apostle, when he was caught up to paradise, are truly “unspeakable”—such as it is not possible for a man to utter!

But this I would inquire of my reader—Do you *believe* these things? Have you that “lively hope” of which the Scriptures speak, of this “everlasting life?” Alas! too just is that scornful saying of the Turks, that “Christians cannot believe, themselves, when they talk such glorious things of their world to come; for if they did they would never be so afraid to die!” Does this reproach touch you, my reader? I ask it solemnly,—Does it touch you?

And if it does, why so? Is it peradventure, because you have not yet given yourself to *Him*, through whom alone you can become entitled to this everlasting life? It is they only

“ which receive abundance of grace, and of *the gift of righteousness*, who shall *reign in life* by one, even *Jesus Christ*.” Rom. v. 17. “ This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and *this life is in his Son*.” 1 John v. 11. And therefore, for all future Hope, as well as present Faith, and Charity, we must be, emphatically, “ in Christ !” O then to close this portion of our meditations on the Creed with a more simple, direct, devoted, yielding up ourselves to Christ ! As we have come now to the end of this confession of faith, so must we come to the end of *every thing in this world !* Here we have no continuing city. Our days are as a shadow, and there is no abiding. And what, if while this present life rushes on so swiftly, you have yet secured no hold upon the *life to come ?*

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

PART IV.

BELIEF OF THE TRUTH.

Μαθάνειν τὸ πρότερον, πράττειν τὸ ὕστερον.—CLEMENS ALEX.

Character has its roots in truth ; and the ultimate product of truth is practice.

Der Gedankenkreis enthält den Vorrath dessen, was durch die Stufen des Interesse zur Begehrung, und dann durchs Handeln zum Wollen aufsteigen kann.

HERBART.

The mind is the storehouse of the character. Therein must be laid up, by instruction, that stock of truths, which through the various stages of a personal interest in the objects they represent, are warmed into desire for those objects ; and then, by practical efforts towards their attainment, become at last consolidated into steady purpose and will.

None of the truths of Revelation hath its end in mere knowledge or speculation, but in *Religion*, that so they may bind and oblige our conduct in some way or other. If they be taken into our faith, they involve certain modifications of our inward and our outward being. Our self-love, our self-interest, our accustomed feeling or accustomed conduct, must give way. There is no indulgence, nor compromise, nor alternative ;—all must yield, or nothing is gained. It is not the belief of propositions of mathematics, or properties of matter ; which may lie in heaps in the mind, and have no effect whatever on any of its practical occupations. But it is the belief of our own condition as lost or saved ; of God's right over us, and his ways of exercising it ; of our duty, and of our destiny.

IRVING.

PART IV.

BELIEF OF THE TRUTH.

CHAPTER I.

BELIEF, AN INTELLIGENT CONVICTION OF TRUTH.

WE have now completed our meditations on the *Subject-matter* of the Apostles' Creed. But still there is a topic, included in the very term by which we denominate that formulary, which must not be overlooked. For that word "Creed" involves considerations of the highest personal importance. I need scarcely mention the origin of this title. It comes from the first word with which the Latin original begins. Just as the Song of the Virgin Mary is called in our Prayer-book the "Magnificat," from the first word which occurs in the Latin version of it—and the Song of Simeon is termed, from a similar cause, the "Nunc Dimittis"—so this summary of the articles of our faith is called "The Creed," from its first word, "Credo," "I believe."

But the great question is, What mean we by this declaration, "Credo," "I believe?" Is there not here a call to inquiry as to the *state of mind* with which we confess those articles of our faith? Must we not pass on from the *objects* of faith which those several articles have brought before us, to the *subjective* feelings with which the contemplation and avowal of those objects must be accompanied? We profess,

very solemnly, a belief in most momentous truths—what is THE NATURE OF THAT BELIEF which we thus profess?

Now, in seeking an answer to this question we shall find, I think, that the state of mind with which the Christian receives and avows the articles of his Creed is that of intelligent Conviction—of hearty Affection—and of practical Submission—with reference to the truths which they commemorate.

Let us consider, in this Chapter, the INTELLIGENT CONVICTION which we profess, when we declare concerning the articles of the Christian faith, “I BELIEVE them all.”

Now, our convictions concerning anything that we receive as true are based on very simple grounds. They rest on two great foundations—the one of *direct Perception*, the other of *indirect Conclusion*.

By the *direct Perception* of inward consciousness, we become acquainted with facts within us. By that of our outward senses, with facts without us. The one called ordinarily, Intuition; the other, Sensation. But in both these cases the result produced is knowledge—positive, personal knowledge of those facts. And knowledge, too, in each case equally direct and certain. What we find *within us* by the mental eye, we have as much authority for being convinced of, as what we see without us by the bodily eye. Our internal intuitions are as much to be depended on as our external sensations. I am as certain by my consciousness that I live—I think—I have an intelligent self-determining, self-acting soul, as I am certain by my senses, that I see another being alive, and exhibiting the marks of an intelligent, self-determining, and self-acting soul. I am *more* certain by my consciousness, that I am, than I can be certain by my senses, that anything

else is. These, then, are the convictions of direct perception, whether inward or outward, which constitute knowledge.

But the other great foundation of our convictions is *indirect Conclusion*. And it is on this that all our certainty, of whatever kind, or from whatever quarter, beyond the limits of direct perception, must be based. For immediately that we pass the bounds—the narrow bounds—of intuition and sensation, we no longer find the facts within us, nor are sensible of the facts without us, but we only *conclude* their existence, with more or less of certainty, *from* those things which we do find, and are sensible of. And therefore, throughout all this vast field of truth, the result produced in us is not strictly knowledge, but *Faith*; faith which, according to the comprehensive definition of St. Paul, is in the widest sense, and in application to both past, and present, and future, “the evidence of things not seen;”—that principle of our nature, in dependence on which we have as much confidence in things that are not manifest to the outward, or the inward, sense, as if they were so. Faith, I say, (and it is of moment to assure ourselves of this, and bear it constantly in mind,) is not a ground of *religious* conviction, peculiarly;—as if we could say, *I know* mathematical truths—I *know* historical truths—I *know* moral truths;—but I have only *faith*, (which by the very mode of speaking is assumed to be something less than knowledge,) in religious truths. But faith, on the contrary, is—and it must be—the ground of *all our convictions*, whether in science, or in morals, or in history, or in religion,—all our convictions without exception, which have reference to facts that lie one hair’s breadth over the narrow limits of direct perception. What I see and feel I *know*. What I neither see nor feel, be it what it may, I can only *believe*.

And thus you see how extensive is the range of things

through which we are called upon to exercise faith; how various the objects, and classes of objects, to which it must be applied; and how different the kinds, or rather modes of exercise, of this faith, according to the way in which those objects are brought indirectly to our notice.

But all these different kinds of faith are reducible to three. And my object now is just to show you, that these three kinds of faith, by which alone you gain convictions of every thing in every art and science, beyond your own perception—not in immediate communication with your self—are just those which you exercise in succession when you form and utter your convictions on the first, and on the second, and on the third division of the Apostles' Creed.

For, First, there is a *faith in the deductions of reason*; a confidence which the mind reposes, and justly reposes, in the conclusions of its own logical faculty, from things presented to its perception. If I *see* an effect—as, for example, the impression of a man's foot in the sand, I *conclude* from that effect to its sufficient cause; and I am as certain that a man has been there, as if that man also I had *seen*. And just such *conclusions* as these, form the grounds of all the sublime convictions which in science and in philosophy such men as Newton, and Boyle, and Cuvier have arrived at. The mind *puts faith in its own operations*. We repose our confidence on the processes of reasoning which in each particular case have never failed us; and we trust them to the end. And this, therefore, bears the name of *rational conviction*.

Now, just such faith as this, in the deductions of reason, forms the ground of those convictions which we express, in the first division of our Creed, when we declare “I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.” No man has *seen* God at any time. And therefore He

cannot be an object of *knowledge*. But every one sees the *traces*, as it were, of God—his *footsteps*, which he has impressed upon his works.* And he who ponders on these marks, and lets his reason draw out from them the conclusions which they suggest, nay force upon him, is *convinced*, by faith in the conclusions of that reason, that to such a Cause as we call God—a Being, intelligent, powerful, benevolent, adequate to the production of all the effects that we behold,—we must trace up the marks which rouse our notice, and our admiration. “The invisible things of God, even his eternal power and godhead, are clearly seen, *being understood by the things that are made.*” Rom. i. 20.

But then, there is Secondly, a faith which we are continually exercising, (and that, more extensively than even the former,) *in the depositions of testimony*. That is to say; things which we have neither *seen*, by direct perception, nor should have argued out by the exercise of abstract reasoning, are made known to us by the reports of others who have seen them. And our habit of putting faith in testimony, our readiness to trust the statements of our fellow-men in proportion as we have reason to suppose them neither ignorant nor knavish—neither deceitful nor deceived †—this is sufficient ground

* “I can recognize a man by his footsteps on the sand; and must not the constellations, the productions of the earth, and the waves of the sea, convince me that there is one God?”—*A Bedouin Arab: in Ency. Met. Art. Bedouins.*

† We cannot too much insist on the limitations included in this qualifying clause. Otherwise the unsuspecting will be the prey of every impostor, or fanatic, who has address enough to make enormous pretension stand for argument. Nothing is more erroneous than the assertion that it is our duty, as it is our instinct, to give implicit confidence to the claims of (often a merely self-constituted) authority. (SEWELL’S *Christ. Morals*, 330.) Our “belief in men” must depend on the reasons which those men can give us for yielding such belief. “Believe *not* every spirit,” says a better moralist, “but *try the spirits*

for our dependence on that testimony with respect to truths innumerable past, present, and to come. We believe, not only that things are, which we ourselves have not perceived—but also that they have sprung from causes—and will produce results, which we ourselves have not observed. Upon the

whether they are of God : *because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*" 1 John iv. 1. The implicit faith of a child may be very natural, and very engaging ; but is it the duty of a man to remain a child ? to force himself back to childhood ? to repress the developement of that one faculty which constitutes him specifically a man ? to " reject every doubt as it arises, and repel it as he would an unclean or malicious thought ?" (Ibid. 331.)

For, what is this childlike (say rather childish) credulity, which is so praised ? Remember it is the quality of a child, only because (and only just so long as) he is in the stage of merely *animal* being ; while that which constitutes his special humanity is yet undeveloped. We admire this credulity under the term childlike, but its true definition is that it is animal-like—that it is the instinct of *irrational* nature—that instinct which leads all animals to believe without reflection, and even in opposition to experience, that what *seems* to be, *is*,—even as the hen will sit, again and again, upon the same deceptive lump of chalk. And is then the virtue of a man, his bounden duty, to be represented as consisting mainly in that, which he possessed indeed as a child, but only because in that stage of his being he was to that extent, and in that particular, an *irrational* being ! Such a belief is indeed justly called " an instinct." But for what reason " rightly disposed hearts should never doubt it," let those answer who can tell us of children numberless who are *educated by their parents* to believe that all religion is a farce—that fraud is their right—skill in dishonesty their greatest glory—vice their virtue ! Will you say of such : " A child believes all that he hears. Ask him, why ? He can only answer that his father has told him. Ask him why he believes his father ? He cannot tell ; he feels that it is his father who tells him, and that is enough to make him believe. And happy will his lot be, if no evil doubt rises up in after life, compelling him to find a reason for ' the faith that is in him ! ' " Why, in what was the life of our blessed Lord consumed but in continual labour to make the multitude " doubt " the destructive principles which the highest authorities in their church had brought them up in ? to make his disciples throw off their implicit faith in the Pharisees, and beware of their pernicious leaven ? to " snatch from them " (Ibid. 331) their belief in those blind guides that they might walk in the light ?

No ! It is not childlike credulity, to which we are called, but manly conviction ! And manly conviction is grounded, indeed, on testimony, but that

*Story, or testimony from personal observation,** afforded us by others, we are sufficiently convinced of the existence of things beyond our own observation—of the causes of things, which we had not discovered by our own reasoning—of the results of things which we have not tested by our own experience. And herein consists what is called *historical conviction*. I *know* the existence of a city called London, because I have myself become acquainted with it by direct perception. But I

testimony *taken at its proper worth*. Even testimony that we have not investigated, or have not the opportunity or ability to investigate, is accepted by us not on the mere authority of the testifier,—at least not on his own *individual pretensions*, or the pretensions of his party—but according to the balance of probabilities, (though these perhaps have never been very distinctly stated to ourselves,) for his being right. “It is in *concurrent* testimony that the generality of mankind believe in the motions of the earth, and of the heavenly bodies, &c. Their belief is not the result of their own observations and calculations ; yet neither is it the result of their *implicit reliance* on the skill and the good faith of any one or more astronomers ; but it rests on the *agreement of many independent and rival* astronomers ; who want neither the ability nor the will to detect and expose each other’s errors. It is on similar grounds that all men, except about two or three in a million, believe in the existence and in the genuineness of manuscripts of ancient books, such as the Scriptures. It is not that they have themselves examined these ; or again (as some represent) that they rely implicitly on the good faith of those who profess to have done so ; but they rely on the *concurrent and uncontradicted* testimony of all who have made the examination ; both unbelievers and believers of various hostile sects ; any one of whom would be sure to seize any opportunity to expose the forgeries or errors of his opponents. This observation is the more important, because many persons are liable to be startled and dismayed on its being pointed out to them that they have been believing something—as they are led to suppose—on very insufficient reasons ; when the truth is, perhaps, that they have been misstating their reasons.”—ARCHBISHOP WHATELY ; *Rhetoric*, I. ii. 4.

* For a “Story,” or “History,” is, by the force of its etymology, a *testimony from personal observation*—a narrative of facts that we have seen and observed, and investigated for ourselves. ‘*ἱστορεῖν*’ is to take a journey for the purpose of observation : and hence *ἱστορίαι* are the notes of what, in such a journey, we have observed—the “personal narrative,” in modern phrase, of a traveller.

believe the existence of Rome, or of Calcutta, or of Canton, on the depositions of those who have themselves been there. And just similarly, I *know* the existence, and the doings, and the character, of my personal friends, because I have *seen* them living and acting. I *believe* the existence of a Luther, of a Socrates, of all historical personages, because I have *sufficient testimony*, brought down to me from age to age, from those who stood to them in the same relation of personal friends. And who will say that his convictions have not as good a ground in the case of the unseen city as of the seen one; of the man of a former age, as of the present one? Who will contend that we are to doubt the existence of all the world but that little corner of it on which we stand? Who is not ready to go out to a distant colony with as sure a conviction of finding such a place at the end of his voyage, because his fellow-men have deposed to their acquaintance with that place, as that with which he sets out for his well-known country-seat? "There is no science taught", says Bishop Pearson, "without such original belief. There are no letters learnt without preceding faith. There is no justice executed, no commerce maintained, no business prosecuted, without this. All secular affairs are transacted, all great achievements are attempted, all hopes, desires, and inclinations are preserved, by this *faith grounded on the testimony of man.*"

But, just on such a ground, so valid, (and *felt* to be so valid) rest all those truths which we avow in the second division of our Creed, when we declare, "I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord;" and go on to narrate the *historical circumstances* of his life, and death, and resurrection, and ascent into heaven. We take them all upon the testimony of those who *could not be deceived* upon these facts, for they were eye-witnesses and personal friends of him to

whom they testify ; nor could they *have intended to deceive*, for they were holy men. “ That which we have heard ” says one of them, “ which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, of the Word of life ; that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.” 1 John i. 1, 3. “ For we have not followed cunningly devised fables ” says another, “ when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.” 2 Peter i. 16.

But then you will find that, in addition to that Rational belief which rests on the deductions of the understanding—and that Historical belief which is based on the depositions of testimony—there is a third kind which reposes on *the Assertions of Authority*. There are things which we have not seen ourselves—nor found out for ourselves—neither have others seen them ;—*but they have found them out*. Their mental eye has penetrated further than that of other men ; their reason has risen up higher into the unseen world ; their towering mind has been illumined as with a light from heaven, while on the world beneath them still were resting the shadows of night. And on the *authority* of these *Seers* of human kind—these Out-lookers from the posts of observation to which they have been raised ;—from our confidence in their superior wisdom, insight, reach of thought, we are ready to receive, *on their assertion*—their bare assertion—truths, which neither should we have discerned for ourselves, nor, till in simple *faith* we receive them and go on to act upon them, can we even verify for ourselves.* Men are continually doing this. All that we know of our own limited understanding as compared with

* Neque enim quæro intelligere ut credam, sed credo ut intelligam. Nam qui non crediderit, non experietur, et qui expertus non fuerit, non intelliget.
—ANSELM.

that of other men, impels to this. All that we feel of reverence (and we rightly feel it) for the Sages of our species authorizes this. The very ground of subsequent knowledge is such an anticipative faith. The very first condition of all instruction is a preliminary confidence in the assertions, resting on a reverence for the authority, of the instructor. And herein consists that third kind of belief, which is rightly termed *a moral conviction*—an assurance derived from our knowledge of the character, our reverence for the wisdom, our confidence in the authority of one superior to us, that his assertions are deserving of our fullest acceptance.

And just of this moral character are those convictions which we avow in the third division of our Creed, when we profess to believe in the Holy Ghost and in all the particulars of that saving work which he carries on in the Christian church. It is not by deductions of Reason—it is not by depositions of Testimony—but it is by the *Assertions of Authority* that we are assured of the Christian truths which relate to the mysterious present, and the unfathomable future—the unseen world which lies above us, and around us, and before us. And this too an Authority which claims our confidence, not as merely human ;—not as grounded on profundity of wisdom—or loftiness of imagination—or sagacity of conjecture ;—but as having been *proved* to us, by many and infallible external proofs, *divine* : the authority which belongs to men *taught of God*, and giving testimony both by their miraculous endowments, and their holy characters, that so they have been taught : the authority, above all, of Him who by sufficient historical testimony is proved to be *the Son of God*, and to speak *the words of God*. “The Gospel which was preached of me” says Paul, “is not after man ; for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by *the revelation of Jesus Christ*.” Gal. i. 11, 12. “The words that I speak unto you,” says the holy Jesus, “I

speak not of myself; but *the Father that dwelleth in me*, he doeth the works." John xiv. 10.

Such then are the grounds on which repose that intelligent conviction which by the first words of our Creed we publicly profess—grounds, be it remembered, which form the only support for all that we believe and act upon in our every day life. All the combined force of a rational—an historical—a moral conviction, authorizes and obliges us to avow with fullest confidence, "I BELIEVE" the several Articles of the Christian faith.

And let us then observe, first, What a *personal* thing is faith! The Creed, you will remember, is enunciated, not as the opinion of another, but as the firm conviction of our individual mind. It is expressed, not even in the first person plural, though to be recited by multitudes together, but in the *first person singular*, each one speaking of himself, and for himself, to show the solemn personal interest—the awful personal responsibility—which attaches to our faith. Men talk of faith as if it were a something to *come upon us* by some magical influence, rather than to be *exercised by us*, with rational deliberation; as if it so came by nature, or were so infused by grace, as to constitute no personal act of our own mind and heart, for which we must give account; when, really, it is one of the most essentially personal works that we can possibly exercise—more personal, if possible, than our outward doings and sayings, because itself the source and regulator of those outward doings and sayings; and involving more important consequences than any word or deed, because the whole character and direction of our words and deeds, will be regulated by the notions we take up, the views we entertain, the convictions which consolidate themselves within our minds, and the consequent purposes we form and execute in

our daily life. Whether I shall make a fortune by some undertaking proposed to me, or lose the golden opportunity, must depend on my *belief in that undertaking*: and my belief in that undertaking must depend on the amount of inquiry I have made into it—the information I have gained concerning it—the conclusions I have formed from that information—the confidence I have thence attained in the knowledge, wisdom, and good faith of those who propose to me that undertaking. So again, whether I shall ruin myself by rebellion, or raise myself by loyalty, must depend on my *belief* in the power of a sovereign whom I may never have seen—of laws which I may never have read—of judges whose very names I may never have heard of—of a whole system of government, and punishment, and reward, whose authority I know hitherto only by *evidence* and in no way by experience. And can we then say a man is no more accountable for his faith than for the colour of his skin? Is there no weal or woe dependent on the beliefs that he indulges or rejects? Test by experiment the sapient assertion. Persuade yourself for a moment that fire will not burn you; and thrust your hand into the flame. Will no account be taken?—*i. e.* will no practical consequences follow from the ignorance, or the obstinacy, or the presumption, which produced that act? Make, I repeat, the trial, in this particular case, with what impunity you can trifle with the evidence of analogy, and of testimony, and of authority, as to your particular danger from that particular source. Will any one be mad enough to run the risk? And will you then be mad enough to run a similar risk with reference to your immortal soul? Will you trifle with your spiritual interests as you would not with the slightest feelings of your flesh? Will you, from the pride of self-will, or from the delusions of sophistry, or from the heedlessness of presumption, neglect the conclusions of human reason—go counter to the deposi-

tions of historical testimony—despise the assertions of divine authority—and by an ignorant doubting of the best attested truths concerning God your Father—Christ your Saviour—the Holy Ghost your Sanctifier, *thrust your soul into the fire of hell?* O the unspeakable awfulness of that one thought—*your* soul—your Self—your individual personality; which Self, and which alone, consents to, or rejects, asserts or denies, believes or doubts, the articles of the Christian faith!

And hence see, secondly, what a *practical* thing is faith. It leads to corresponding action. It decides the mind within, and thus it influences the conduct without. For the mind is the man. And as the man so will be his deeds. In proportion to the strength of our convictions upon any subject; to the frequency with which they are reproduced before the consciousness; to the vividness with which they breathe and burn within us; will be the complexion of our character, and the tenor of our life. It was a taunt of the Emperor Julian, to the Christians whom he had deserted, “‘I BELIEVE’ is the sum of all your wisdom!” But in that taunt he spoke a glorious truth. The very truth which St. Paul proclaimed when he declared “The life that I live in the flesh I live *by the faith* of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.” Reader, do *you find* your faith thus practical? Is it to you all your wisdom, all your life? When you say, “I believe in God the Father,” do you therefore reverence Him, love Him, obey Him? When you say, “I believe in God the Son,” do you therefore trust in Him as your Saviour, yield yourself to him as your King? And when you say, “I believe in God the Holy Ghost,” do you therefore cherish His holy inspirations, follow his heavenly impulses, walk in the Spirit, and cultivate the integrity, the love, the hope, the joy, the peace, the longsuffering, the gentleness, the goodness, the meekness, the temperance, which are the fruits of the Spirit?

It is one thing to profess, "I believe." It is another thing to have the belief we profess! For he who has that belief has therewith all those good works by which (as our Article declares) "a lively faith is as evidently known as a tree discerned by its fruit."

CHAPTER II.

BELIEF, AN HEARTY AFFECTION FOR TRUTH.

THAT is an awful saying of our blessed Lord concerning the very first work of the Holy Ghost, “He shall convince the world of sin, *because they believe not in me.*” John xvi. 9. How different then is the notion which our Lord must have formed, of belief, and of the responsibility of men for their beliefs, from that in which the mass of worldly men indulge ! Jesus looks on faith, most evidently, as an act of the will, and not a mere process of the understanding—as something in which our moral nature, not merely our intellectual, is concerned—as something, therefore, with reference to which we must give account, and for our want of which we must stand guilty and condemned before the bar of God. It is—and we have for this the divine authority of the Son of God—it is a *sin* not to believe in him !

Now, why is this ? Because the faith of which the Scriptures speak includes in it the *affections of the heart*. It cannot but do so *on account of the objects with which it is conversant*. There may indeed be a purely speculative belief ; but then, only with reference to objects which do not affect—and only so long as they do not affect—our personal welfare. For example—that two and two make four, appears as perfectly abstract a proposition,—which we can have no sort of interest in affirming or denying, and which therefore we receive on purely intellectual grounds,—as any that can be named. Yet even

this, immediately that it comes to be applied to something in which we *are* concerned, (to the reckoning up, or the disposal, of our possessions, for example,) comes down into the region of the *personal*; and in many supposable cases would be exposed to challenge, or to being tampered with, through the influence of our feelings, if there were any possible room for questioning or confusing it.

Much more, therefore, are all those facts and truths which relate *directly* to our personal interest, exposed to all the questioning, and all the various modifications of acceptance, which the action on them of our personal feelings, our tastes and habits, our hopes and fears, our preferences and purposés, can produce. The external evidence for those facts or truths may remain untouched, and yet the *internal persuasion* of their certainty may vary with a vast indefiniteness, not only in different minds, but in the same mind, in its different moods. The object that we look at may be fixed. But the atmosphere through which we look at it is exposed to all the variations of density, all the vicissitudes of cloud and clearness, dimness and distinctness, of our subjective being.

For, in the first place, our very *attention* to the truths of Christianity depends on the disposition of our heart towards them.

Those truths are revealed with reference to a particular condition of mankind, for which condition they proclaim the remedy provided by God. But, only as we are conscious (however dimly) of being in this condition, shall we listen with any attention to the proclamation of the remedy for it. Amidst the multitudinous objects which are continually soliciting our regard, the mind has no leisure—it has no inclination—to occupy itself with any but such as respond, in some way, to its feelings. “They that are whole need not a physician,

but they that are sick." And they who think themselves to be whole, may have commended to them remedies innumerable, with all persuasiveness of argument, and yet can really give no attention to, because they take no interest in, the topic pressed upon them. It may be all very true ! the information may be very useful to them some day or other ! Possibly their friends are right ! But really, these are dreams of valetudinarians, which they have not time to enter into !

But still more is our Attention to religious truth withheld, when the personal interest is, not merely not directed towards it, but *engaged against it*. And no one can recollect for a moment the main topics of the Creed, without perceiving that there can be no neutrality in the human heart, concerning them;—that where the interest is not engaged upon their side, it must be necessarily against them;—that what is not sought for as a needful remedy for spiritual anxiety, must be repelled as an intrusion on our peace. God, as the all-searching Inspector, Ruler, Judge : Christ, as the holy Lord to whom we have been dedicated by a solemn vow : the Holy Spirit as the Guardian and Enforcer of the natural conscience in us, yea and the avenger of its injuries :—all these topics are not simply tasteless, they are unpalatable—they are bitter—to the worldly heart. And that which men know, by a sort of instinct of aversion, to be unpalatable, they will not voluntarily partake of. "As the mouth tasteth meat" says Job, "so the ear trieth words. Men choose to themselves judgment; they know among themselves what is good." There is a quick anticipation of what will *suit* their state of heart, and what will not ; of what will gratify, and what will disgust, their mental palate. And you *see* this in the world. You see with what dexterity, what steadiness, what success, men contrive to hear about religion, talk about religion, and yet keep off from all actual contact with religion ; all personal attention to it ; all application

of it to their own condition ; and consequently every thing that deserves the name of *faith* in its revelations. “ What are you reading now ? ” asked some one of a person whom I knew. “ Why, I am reading the Bible ; ” (was the answer) “ but only, as an historical work—not as *the Bible*, you know ! ” O too just exclamation of the Prophet ; “ To whom shall I speak, and give warning that they may hear ? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they *cannot hearken*. Behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach, they have no delight in it ! ”

But you will find, in the second place, that the *understanding* of the truths of Christianity, depends upon the state of our affections towards them. For even suppose the *words* attended to, our understanding of those words, in all subjects of æsthetic apprehension, whether those of taste, of morals, or of piety, will be affected by the state of our personal sensibility. Words are only signs—the signs of *things* ; and therefore they can be understood by us, (taken in their full force and import,) only in proportion as we are acquainted with the *things*, or at least the *class* of things, of which they are the signs. Talk to a blind man about colours ; write to a deaf man about sounds ; expatiate before a dull hard man about the infinite feelings of the taste and the imagination ; and you find at once that not the plainest words can convey your meaning, because there is no responsiveness, no receptivity, no *sense*, either physical or mental, for the *things* of which those words are but the signs.*

* “ Every man understands by his affections more than by his reason ; and when the wolf in the fable went to school to learn to spell, whatever letters were told him, he could never make anything of them but ‘ agnus ; ’ he thought of nothing but his belly : and if a man be very hungry you must give him meat before you give him counsel. *A man’s mind must be like your proposition*, before it can be entertained ; for whatever you put into a man, it will smell of the vessel ; it is a man’s mind that gives the emphasis and makes the argument to prevail.”—BISHOP TAYLOR.

And just so is it with moral and religious truth, and all the touching words of God upon those subjects which concern the yearnings and anticipations, the hopes and fears, the tastes and the necessities, of the inner man. God may speak, but men do not hear. He may set objects before them, but they do not see. He may enunciate truths which are fitted to stir up the noblest emotions of the soul, but they remain unmoved. The prophet Isaiah was warned of this, at the very moment when he was commissioned by God to proclaim such truths. "Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat;" (in Scripture, the *occasion* of a thing is often represented as the *cause* of it: a person is said to *make* that, which he only makes *apparent*, is the *occasion* of bringing forth to light,) "and make their ears heavy and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and *understand with their heart*, and convert, and be healed." Isa. vi. 9, 10.

Nor is it only by this inward susceptibility that one man's understanding of truth will differ from another's; but the understanding of the same man will be different, at different periods of his moral history, in different states of heart. That which the bosom friends of Jesus, whom he had taken so much pains to instruct, could not at one time comprehend, he promises shall be at last made clear to them. And how? Not by the presenting, by an additional *outward* revelation, *new truths* before their eyes; new words; new proofs; new illustrations; but by the purging of those eyes by an *inward influence* to enable them to look out clearly on the truths, the words, the proofs, the illustrations, which he had already set before them, but they understood them not. "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, *the Spirit of truth*, is come," (which Spirit, remember, was to take up his residence in the *inward man*, to influence the sentiments and

tastes and feelings of *the heart*,) “he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself;” (with some new revelation) “but whatsoever he shall hear,” (*i. e.* from me, in whose name he comes,) “that shall he speak.” John xvi. 13. The work of the Spirit was not to communicate truths absolutely *new*, but to open the understanding, by disposing the heart, to the perception of truths which already lay wrapped up in their Master’s personal instructions; and the force, and compass, and application of which to each emergency as it arose, should by the Spirit’s inward light be manifested to them. “He shall teach you all things”—how? By “bringing all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” John xiv. 26. O then, to seek this inward teaching as essential to a hearty belief! O to bow our knees continually to that Divine Illuminator, that “Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ,” who alone can “enlighten the eyes of our understanding, that we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints!”

“So much the rather Thou, celestial Light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate; there plant eyes; all mist from thence
Purge and disperse; that we may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight!”

But there is still another element of genuine belief, of even greater importance; the presence of which depends especially on the state of the affections towards the truths presented to us. There is the just *appreciation* of those truths; not merely our Attention to them, and our Understanding of them, but our forming a due estimate, entertaining a just sense, of their surpassing *worth*, their *dignity*, their *divinity*. You may draw a man’s attention to a subject; you may explain to him, theoretically, that subject — and yet he may have no just

appreciation of that subject ; no care about it ; no delight in it ; no passion for it. Take music, for example. A man may have been taught its theory ; and drilled into a mechanical facility, nay dexterity, in its execution ; and yet, if he have *no heart* for music—if there be not *music in his soul*—he will never make a true musician. And so with painting. And so with poetry. And so, too, with the moral feelings ; of truth, of honour, of dignity, of friendship, of affection. The characters of whom we read in history, the persons whom we meet with in society, the ideals painted out to us in poetry,—all are appreciated, entered into, felt, most differently, by different minds, according to *the specific sensibility of those minds*. None but the high-minded glows at the beholding of heroic deeds. None but the truthful is fired with enthusiasm for the friends of truth. None but the unselfish can appreciate the majesty of self-sacrifice. And so, too, *none but the devout*, can feel the sublimity of devoutness—none but the holy, the purity of holiness—none but the spiritually minded, the dignity of spiritual mindedness. And see how this tells on the belief—the hearty reception and embracing—of the revelations commemorated in our Creed. For those revelations, let us remember, are revelations not of *truths merely* ; abstract *doctrines* ;—but of *persons*,—living persons,—characters ;—God the Father, as the Being in whom shines forth all wisdom, and all goodness, and all power ;—God the Son, who is the impersonation of compassion and forbearance ; not passing by, but honouring, the demands of the severest sanctity ;—God the Holy Ghost, who is the exalted, the unearthly, the spiritual, the heavenly One. And how then can we feel *the worth* of characters like these, so as to exercise towards them that belief, which includes within it reverence, and love, and trust, and gratitude, and admiration, and hope, but in proportion as *the seeds of those excellencies* which excite

such feelings, have become implanted,—are in some degree unfolded,—in ourselves? There can be confidence, only where there is congruity. There can be affection, only where there is similarity. There can be a *right appreciation* of another in any of his qualities, only where there is a *corresponding feeling* with that other. “How *can ye believe*,” says Jesus to the Pharisees, “which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only?” It is *impossible* for a worldly mind to appreciate an unworldly truth. It is *impossible* for him whose heart is strung and pitched only to the sounds of earth, to give forth any resonance to the voice of one unearthly:—

“There is in souls a sympathy with sounds,
And as the mind is pitch’d the ear is pleas’d.
Some chord in unison with what we hear
Is touch’d within us, and *the heart* replies.”

CHAPTER III.

BELIEF, A PRACTICAL SUBMISSION TO TRUTH.

GOD has revealed to us the mystery of his truth, declares St. Paul, “for the *obedience of faith*.” Rom. xvi. 26. This is the ultimate object of all the manifestations of God to man. On this one point He designs all the writings of his prophets, and the preaching of his messengers to bear. All are vouchsafed for the production, in those to whom they come, of a *submission and surrender of the will* to God, in correspondence with the truths revealed.

When, therefore, we say, “I believe” the Articles of the Christian faith, we avow, not simply our intelligent Conviction of these truths, and our hearty Affection towards them, but moreover our PRACTICAL SUBMISSION to them;—our recognition of the relation in which the very fact of their communication places us with God; and our determination to walk, in daily life, agreeably to the same.

Consider, then, the Relation, and the corresponding Obligations, to God, which we recognize, by our avowal of Belief in the three grand divisions of the Articles of the Christian faith.

There is indeed a relation in which we stand to God antecedent to that into which we are brought by the knowledge of specifically Christian truth. The existence, the majesty, the supremacy of that Being whose *special* relation to us Christianity clears up, and whose special disposition towards us it

reveals,—these are already known to us (or knowable) by the testimony both of nature, and of events. We cannot open our eyes but we behold around us works of wisdom and power and benevolence, which proclaim an intelligent workmaster. We cannot exercise our reason on the history of our species without discovering proof of His superintendence, of His education, of His creature, man. And in this way, we are led to recognize a relation in which all beings,—in which especially we ourselves,—stand to this first and best, as creatures towards a Creator—dependents towards a Benefactor—subjects towards a Sovereign Ruler. The simple belief in God as our Supreme moral Governor, involves in it an *obedience*, springing out of such belief, to every, the slightest, indication of his will. Even in this limited revelation—even with reference to such purely rational, or traditional, convictions,—there cannot be a real *faith*, not followed by a corresponding *work*. To believe must be to act according to our belief. Whence the old definitions of religion as that state of mind which knowing God strives to please him. And just as when “the fool says in his heart, there is no God,” the next immediate testimony concerning such is, “they are corrupt, they have done abominable works;” (Ps. xiv. 1,) so, we cannot concede the existence of a state of mind other than that of “the fool,” (the practical atheist,) wherever the acknowledgment of God leads not to the *surrender to him* of the reverence, the homage, the obedience, which such a relation demands.

But when we come on to the revelations of Christ, how enlarged, how altogether new, are the relations which open out upon us, as existing between this awful Being and ourselves! It is not the God of nature, merely, who is disclosed to us in the Articles of the Christian faith; it is this God, *in that character in which he has revealed himself by his only begotten Son*. It is God, not as our Creator simply, but

as our Father—our Redeemer—our Sanctifier. It is God in such a form, and in such relations to us, as are nowhere else made known—as from no other source can be discovered. How strongly is this declared in Holy Writ. “No one hath seen God at any time;” has gained an adequate conception of his character; “*the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he only hath declared him,*” or made him clearly known. John i. 18. “As no man knoweth the Son but the Father; so *neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal him.*” Matt. xi. 27.

For, the God whom the Gospel reveals to us, is One who stands related not merely to our instinctive sense of dependence upon unseen power (the first element of all religion); but also to our moral feeling of Affinity to that power as his offspring—of Guilt before him as his undutiful offspring—of Corruption as his degenerate offspring. According to the enlargement of our views of our own personal nature, state, and character, so do we need, and so is there vouchsafed to us, the revelation of some new feature of the character of God as bearing relation to those views. And each new feature of God’s character, in such relation to us, involves in it the demand, and binds upon us the obligation, for a *correlative practical submission* to Him in that relation.

Do you meditate upon your *rational, spiritual, nature*,—so mysterious in its workings, powers, infinite imaginings, — till you are filled with a conviction (not a proud, but awe-inspiring one) of your essential difference from all other beings on the face of the earth; of your possessing, in your very capacity to know God, a title and a call to enter into communion with Him, as His child, the image of his perfections, and the heir of his immortality? Then, of such faint surmises—such imaginations trembling at their own audacity—there is

revealed to you in the Gospel of Christ, upon divine authority, the clear and settled confirmation ; when you are taught to call on God, with child-like reverence and confidence, as your FATHER.

And what then is the duty which you owe to One revealed to you under such a character and relation ? What the practical submission of the will, which such a truth demands ? Is it merely reverence, to which you are called ? Is it dependence ? Is it absolute obedience ? Is it not something more than all these ? including all these ? sanctifying and ennobling all these ? and breathing over them the fragrance of a child-like piety and devotedness ? If God stands thus in close relation to us, then are we called to *imitate him*, in our mind and disposition and character ; “ Be ye followers of God ” says the Apostle,—imitators of his holiness—“ as dear children.” “ Be ye perfect,” says our Lord ;—aim at moral excellence, at spiritual purity in all its compass and completeness—“ even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

And are we not called moreover to *hold communion with a* God so manifested to us, as our Father ?—to raise our spirits to the contemplation of Him who is, like us, spirit ?—to “ speak with God ” (amazing privilege !) “ as a man speaketh with his friend ;”—till, like the favoured Moses, our very countenance become resplendent with a radiance that we know not of ? Yes, this is truly our duty, as it is our privilege ; for thus saith the Son of God : “ The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth ; for *the Father seeketh such to worship him.*”

Nor is a filial *zeal for God* less incumbent on us than imitation of his character, and communion with his Spirit. All that Jesus, *The Son of God*, was by eminence, and so as none can reach to ; that we, the sons of God, are to become, in our poor measure, each one in his sphere. And what was the

principle of His existence? “My meat is, to do the will of him that sent me; and to finish his work.”—“For I came down from heaven, not do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.” And what was the accompaniment in his consciousness, of such entire surrender of his will? “He that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.” And what the blessed hope to which this self-surrender led? “Father, I have glorified thee on the earth. Glorify me now with thine own self!” O to lose our own will, more and more, in God’s will! to consecrate our powers to his service! to advance his kingdom! to glorify his name! and “as he that hath called us is holy, so to be holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy!”

Then again; does the very grandeur of such an assurance of your proper nature only make more startling to you, by the force of contrast, your convictions of your *actual degradation and unworthiness*, and press upon you the alarming certainty that from this nature you have fallen? O how deeply fallen! Do you feel, the more you are conscious that you were formed to be God’s child, the shame, the remorse, the self-upbraiding, and the sense of gross undutifulness, which rushed upon the prodigal, in the parable, when he “came to himself,” and cried “I have sinned against heaven, and before my Father, and am no more worthy to be called his son?” And, therefore, does the very loftiness of your elevation as a spiritual being make more dreadful to you the depth of your degradation as a fallen being? Then, how essential to you, in such a view of yourself, is some corresponding revelation of God’s character and relation to you—of his feelings towards you—of his doings for you—such as shall meet the gloomy anticipations of a self-aborrent, self-condemning spirit! And

what find you, in your Creed, but such a corresponding revelation, in the record it preserves to you of "God THE SON, redeeming you and all mankind!"—of that same God who is your Father, but still most righteously held back by his essential holiness and justice, from recognizing you, in your state of alienation, as his child;—descending nevertheless, in the person of his First-begotten, to recal you to himself; and coming towards every penitent (even as that tender parent in the parable) to meet you in your wretchedness, and acknowledge you, notwithstanding your past unworthiness, and "fall upon your neck and kiss you!" "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; not imputing their trespasses unto them!"

And what is the practical submission to such a manifestation of God, which will be wrought in the will of him who thoroughly believes it? Will it not bring him to a *heartly closing with* the grace thus revealed to him? Even as St. Paul, immediately on commemorating this stupendous fact that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, turns round on the Corinthians with the practical exhortation, "We therefore as ambassadors for Christ, pray *you to be reconciled to God!*" Even as he adds with solemn admonition, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you that *ye receive not the grace of God in vain!*" Of all the duties that we can owe to God, this of yielding to his mercy is the greatest. Of all the responsibilities into which we can be brought, this which we owe to the Redeeming Son of God is the most awful! Of all the sins which can enhance our guilt, and acuminate our final wretchedness, this of turning away from him that speaketh from heaven is the most tremendous! "If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received its just recompense of

reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by THE LORD ?”

Nor are we less called by such a manifestation to *an adoring gratitude* for the grace thus vouchsafed to us. Gratitude is the offspring of that sense of equity and retributive justice which is uneasy at the perception of disproportion—which is impatient till an equivalent return—or at the least some due acknowledgment of the justice of such return—is rendered for whatever we experience ; and till the balance of the feelings, which has become unsettled by the casting some new thought into the mind, begins at least to tremble towards its point of rest. It is a re-action of the heart. It is the elastic rebound of our nature to the impression which has been made upon it—its rising up and resiliating towards the hand by which it has been touched. And its general formula of utterance, therefore, is that of the impatient Psalmist, “ What shall I render to the Lord for all the benefits he hath done unto me !” And what then is the practical re-action of the grateful spirit towards Him who has come down to us from heaven, and died for us upon the cross ! How can we express that new condition and relation of the will towards a *redeeming God*, but in the burning words of Paul, “ The love of Christ constraineth us ! Because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead ; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto him that died for them and rose again !”

And what then shall we say to *the dutiful devotedness* which we owe to Him who is thus revealed to us, as our redeeming God ? Can any one be satisfied with less than the giving up his whole self to that Deliverer, who gave himself for us ? Does not the Christian long, and strive, to take Christ’s will into his own, that it may rule, and actuate, and reduce it into

universal harmony with his? Do you not feel that in being rescued by him from the law of sin and death you are thereby brought into allegiance to the *law of Christ*; so that you should regard yourself as crucified with Christ, and though you live, yet not you, but Christ lives in you? And will you not confess that never has Duty, “daughter of the voice of God,” so sovereign a power over us, (as never does she bear so sweet an aspect towards us,) as when we have ourselves with our own hands enthroned her in a heart won over, and reduced into affectionate submission, by the love of Christ?—

“Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
 The Godhead’s most benignant grace;
 Nor know we anything so fair
 As is the smile upon thy face:
 Flowers laugh before thee on their beds;
 And Fragrance in thy footing treads;
 Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
 And the most ancient heavens, through Thee are fresh and
 strong!”

But what if this further revelation of God’s character and relation to you, only makes you feel the more your *degeneracy*; even as the approach of that parent in the parable would make his self-upbraiding son the more ashamed of the rags, and filth, and disease, and destitution, in which he was endeavouring to creep back towards his home? What if the nearer you come to the perception of God’s *holiness* as your Father, and the more you feel extended to you his *compassion* as your Redeemer, you are pained and humbled and alarmed at your *corruption*—your remaining rebelliousness—your ingratitude—your inability to do his will and glorify his name;—then, does not all this render indispensable to you, and make proportionably welcome to you, that discovery of his character in relation to *this particular* also of your nature and condition, which is proclaimed in that division of the Creed which tells of “God THE HOLY

GHOST, who sanctifieth all the elect people of God?" Yes! He can restore as well as pardon! He can live in you as well as die for you. He can deck you with the ornaments of holiness as well as free you from the wretchedness of guilt. He can put on you the best robe, and put a ring on your hand and shoes on your feet. He can re-instate you in all the splendour of sonship, as well as in your right and title to it. He can endow you with the gifts of grace, as well as of righteousness, through the descent into your soul, and the indwelling, of the Holy Ghost! "Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and *by the Spirit* of our God."

And what then is the practical submission which we owe to such a truth as this? If God the Holy Ghost is the Author of all godliness, must we not learn to count religion a work not of the understanding merely, as the acknowledgment of truth, and the assent to evidence, and the surrender to argument;—nor a work of the imagination, as a mere soaring into the ideal, and the realizing of poetic dreams of dignity and grandeur and sentimentality;—no nor a work of the animal emotions, as the indulging in devout affection, and nourishing the dubious and dangerous warmth of an enamoured fervour;—still less a work of external reverence and ceremony, wasting the energies in the pomp and circumstance of a ritual worship, and the puerilities of a superstitious strictness, and the scrupulosities of an enslaved and grovelling conscience, summing up all perfection in implicit obedience to priestly authority;—but a work of *the mind, and heart, and will combined*—of the whole spirituality of our being, harmonized by the presence and indwelling of the Spirit of light, and life, and power; who warms while he illuminates, guides while he impels, and renders our obedience not the blind submission of a slave, but the reasonable service of a child of God whom the truth makes free.

Nor less is the Christian bound to *confide in* the Spirit of God, than to honour him by the nature of the service which he endeavours to render. The Holy Ghost is vouchsafed, not only to teach us what we ought to be, but to enable us so to be. And never do we confess him with a *practical* faith, if while we adore his Deity, and strive to imitate his purity, we do not surrender ourselves unreservedly to his holy inspirations, and begin, continue, and end our works in Him. Not by the arguments of prudence—not by the persuasions of philosophy—not by the efforts of self-determination—but by the bathing in the atmosphere, the inhaling the breath, the living by the life, of Him who is “the Lord and Giver of life,” must the Christian put from him sin—and rise superior to temptation—and be vigorous in duty—and bring forth the “fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.” “This I say then, *walk in the Spirit*, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For *the fruit of the Spirit* is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”

And therefore, finally, our great duty to the Spirit of God is *diligently to cherish his holy inspirations*. There is an inspiration of the Holy Ghost which belongs to all Christians in every age, and without which they can never perfectly love God nor worthily magnify his holy name. In this must we live. By this must we be elevated above ourselves—animated to high thoughts and heavenly cogitations—sustained in noble and valorous deeds. They who languish always in a spiritual sloth; whose views of divine things are obscure,—their feeling of them cold—their efforts towards them feeble—never can rise above the vulgar herd of merely nominal Christians. Not such were the Apostles of Christ—not such the noble army of martyrs—not such the saints in every age, who have lived as in the presence of their Father, and their Saviour, and

breathed, while yet on earth, the atmosphere of heaven. A genuine enthusiasm—a presence in their soul of Deity himself—a life as equable as it was vigorous, which set and kept in motion all the powers of their being—this kindled in them sentiments, breathed through them feelings, quickened them to actions, worthy of Him who had called them to his kingdom and glory. And when shall we imitate them? How shall we, like them, manifest ourselves the temples of the Holy Ghost? Only as we cherish those blessed moments when our thoughts mount upwards to the pure serene of heavenly cogitation, and in the clear bright light of heaven we see things as they are! Only as we foster that pure, though ardent glow of spirit from which there flashes forth many a burning purpose of devoted love! Only as we cultivate that compact, concentrated, state of will, when filled and actuated by some grand idea, we see, desire, pursue, *one thing*: and God's commandment all alone lives in us unmixed with baser matter! O to be indeed thus “in the Spirit!”—to *live* the truths that we have learned!—to BE as we BELIEVE!

THE END.

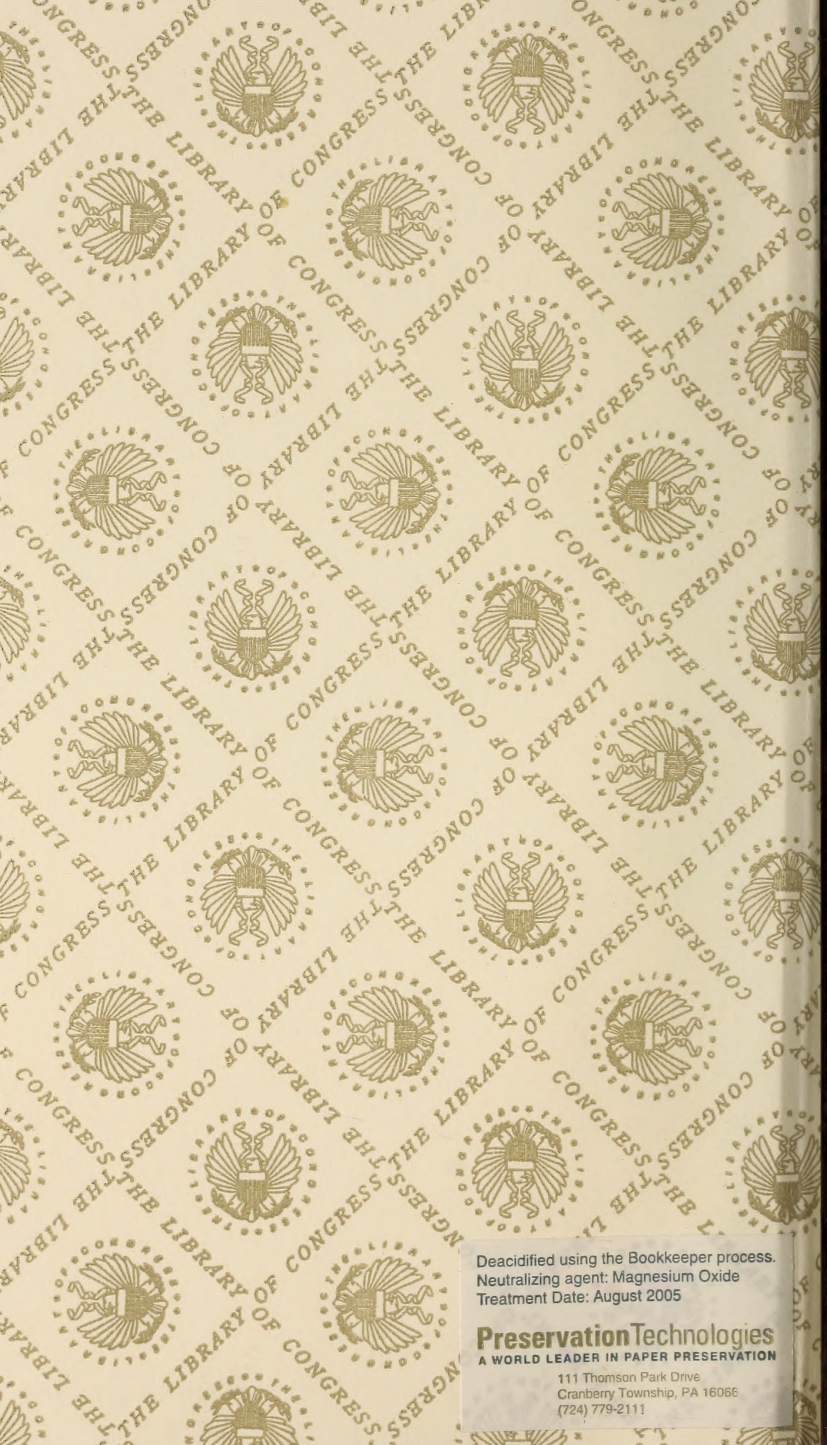
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